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THE GENTEEEL SPOTTER; or, The Night Hawks of New York.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "OVERLAND KIT," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROB," "KENTUCK, THE SPORT," "INJUN DICK," "CAPTAIN DICK TALBOT," "GOLD DAN,"
"TALBOT OF CINNABAR," "RED RICHARD," "KIT CARSON, KING OF GUIDES," ETC., ETC.



"WHO ARE YOU?" BRISTOL BILL DEMANDED. "YOUR DEADLY FOE!" RESPONDED THE YOUNG MAN INSTANTLY, AND AT THE SAME TIME PRODUCING A REVOLVER FROM UNDER THE TABLE.

The Genteel Spotter;

OR,

The Night Hawks of New York.

A Tale of the Lawless.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "THE DEMON DETECTIVE," "OVER-
LAND KIT" "BAT OF THE BATTERY,"
"TALBOT OF CINNABAR," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE RIVER.

TEN o' the night, no moon visible, and only a few stars peering through the blanket of darkness.

Lonely enough it was on the river, for quite a fog had swept in from the ocean, and the lights on the shores could hardly be distinguished.

The water was almost deserted, for the night was so thick that only those crafts absolutely obliged to be abroad cared to brave the peril.

Every now and then, at long intervals, the hull of some river steamer would loom up in the darkness, as it forged through the mist, or the broad-back ferry-boats would cut a lane with their lights through the darkness.

We write of the great city of New York, our modern Babylon, renowned for its wealth, and equally renowned for its crime.

New York harbor is famous throughout Christendom for its beauty and safety.

The navies of the world might ride therein.

On the west of the city sweeps the broad Hudson, or the North river, as it is usually termed in the Metropolis, and the narrow strait that connects the waters of Long Island Sound with the Atlantic ocean, emptying into New York Bay, washes the other shore of the city until at the Battery, as the little park at the extremity of Manhattan Island is called, it forms a junction with the Hudson, and the two, expanding, make New York Bay.

This passage is known as the East river, and on the night of which we write, a small boat had shot out from a dark nook, nearly opposite to the Navy Yard on the Long Island shore, and to the south of the point which in bygone days was known as Corlear's Hook.

Within the boat were two men, and it glided through the water so noiselessly that had a keen observer chanced to notice it he would surely have been obliged to rub his eyes and ask if it was not a phantom craft which he beheld—a sort of modern Flying Dutchman on a small scale—or a creation of a disordered brain.

The oar-locks were evidently muffled, for not the slightest sound came from them as the oars rose and fell.

There was just the splash of the water-drops as they fell from the broad blades into the stream, yet so carefully and so skillfully did the two oarsmen ply their sweeps that the sound of the stroke could not be distinguished above the dash of the waves.

The wind was blowing in fitful gusts, making a short, choppy sea, whereon the white-caps could be distinguished every now and then.

The boat was painted a dark green, so it was exactly the color of the water through which it made its way.

The men in the boat wore dark clothes, blue flannel shirts, and oilskin hats, popularly known as sou'westers, hats with wide brims which could be pulled low down on the forehead, and capes behind to protect the neck.

A pair of regular "smack" fishermen, as the crews of the vessels that cruise along the coast from Long Island to Nantucket, and who supply the New York market with deep-sea fish, are called.

But no honest fishermen would have occasion to be abroad at such an hour of the night, and rowing too in a boat provided with muffled oars.

Any city man well-posted in regard to the habits of the criminal classes, wouldn't have had any difficulty in guessing the riddle of these mysterious oarsmen.

They were river thieves—river rats—as they are commonly termed, who prey upon the exposed shipping lying at anchor in the stream.

Through their spies they are kept well-informed of the condition of all newly-arrived vessels.

The crews, anxious to get on shore after a long voyage, desert the ships as soon as possible and the crafts are left in charge of one or two men.

The captain often sleeps on board, and some of these worthy mariners are foolish enough to keep considerable money in their cabins.

In the dead hours of the night, selecting a time when the moon does not shine, the river rats, with muffled oars, pull alongside of the ship on board of which their spies have discovered, or suspected, there is plunder worth some trouble to obtain.

Watchmen are but human, and the best of them will nod sometimes.

Often the first intimation the guardian of the craft has of danger is when he finds the muzzle of a revolver pressed against his temple and a boarish voice assures him that if he attempts to give the slightest alarm his brains will be blown out upon the instant.

There's hardly one man out of ten thousand who wouldn't "weaken" under such circumstances.

Then the watchman is bound, gagged, and the marauders "go" for the captain in the cabin.

And these river rats are generally desperate men too, who will not hesitate to take life if resistance is offered, or their escape is impeded.

Of all the rascals that infest a big city the river rats are the ugliest to handle and the police fear them the most.

The police force employed to patrol the river is totally insufficient, as it is impossible for the police boat to "cover" the entire river front in a satisfactory manner.

The thieves have a great advantage, for after the police boat has passed a certain point on its rounds it is an impossibility for it to return to that point again for four or five hours.

So, when the gang make up their mind to pay a visit to some craft anchored in the stream, all they have to do is to wait in the shadows of some dark nook on the shore, in the shelter of the piers, near to the vessel which they intend to attack, until the police boat has passed; then they are pretty certain of a clear field, with little danger of interruption, for four or five hours.

The tide was a strong ebb, within an hour of its end, and was racing seaward at a speed of fully four knots an hour.

The mysterious boat, after getting well out into the stream, pointed its prow seaward, following the course of the tide.

The police boat had passed ten minutes before.

And for the police boat the river rats had been on the watch.

Now they were following in its track.

It was easy enough for the marauders to keep watch of the patrol craft, sweeping along with its many pairs of oars, and that is where the river rats have such a decided advantage over the police.

They can distinguish the patrol boat afar and so are able to keep out of its way, but it is an almost impossibility for the police to discover the dark boat of the river thieves, with its muffled oars, stealing phantom-like through the water.

"Everything is O. K.," the stroke-oarsman remarked, a well-built, muscular fellow, with a singularly pleasant voice.

"You bet," responded his companion, who was a thick-set, short, burly man, who, to judge from his figure, was possessed of wonderful strength. "Where does the craft lie?"

"The other side of Governor's Island, off Communipaw."

"And you think there's a chance for a tidy bit of swag?"

"So Red Barry says. He's been piping her off for a week. She's a Dutchman, an oil-ship, laden with petroleum for Bremen. She ought to have sailed to-day, but she has had trouble in shipping her crew, and so will not get away until the day after to-morrow.

"There's only a watchman on board, and a son of one of the owners; a young fellow in poor health, who is returning to his native land.

"He has been operating in the stock market, and, as the result of a successful turn last week, he carries with him about twenty thousand dollars in Government bonds.

"These Dutchmen, you know, are great believers in United States securities.

"Now, there's only this sick man and a single watchman—a thick-headed Irishman, on board of the craft to-night to guard the twenty thousand dollars, and if we can't 'catch on' to the boodle it will be a wonder."

"That's so!"

"The haul is a big one, although we shall have to divvy with Red Barry, and some other party whom Red Barry represents, and that is a clerk in the broker's office where the young Dutchman got the bonds, and who really put up the job."

"There's plenty for all of us," observed the other.

"Better slack up a little and let that ferry-boat pass us, then pass under her stern," remarked the first man, abruptly.

They were right in the track of the boats which run from the South Ferry to Hamilton avenue, Brooklyn, and the taller fellow had noticed that one of the boats was so close upon them that it would be no easy matter to cross her bows.

They ceased rowing and allowed the craft to drift with the tide.

The ferry-boat swept by them, and just as she passed, a female sprung from the stern of the ferry-boat into the water.

Some desperate soul, tired of life, had chosen this wild way of shuffling off the mortal coil.

Not a person on board the ferry-boat noticed this desperate attempt at self-destruction.

There were very few passengers on the boat,

and all of them were in the forward cabins, with the exception of the hapless woman who had elected to find a grave beneath the surface of the rushing tide.

"Great heavens! did you see that?" cried the taller fellow, greatly excited.

He had happened to turn his head just as the woman leaped overboard, and so had a full view of the daring attempt.

"Yes; the durned fool!" observed the other.

"Sheeny, that girl must be saved! Draw in your oars and grab her when she comes to the surface!"

"Are you mad? What is her life or death to us?" cried his companion, astounded.

"To you nothing, but to me much; I know her! I thought we had parted forever, but since fate has seen fit to bring us together again in this strange way, if she is willing to share my fortunes she is welcome."

Inside of a minute the woman, who was singularly beautiful, was in the boat. She was saved.

CHAPTER II.

SPIDER AND FLY.

LONG ago, before the war, one of the wards of the great city of New York was popularly known as the Bloody Sixth, and it was generally believed that it was as much as a man's life was worth for an officer to attempt to take after nightfall any well-known criminal, popular among fellows of his kidney, out of certain districts in the ward.

It was the abiding-place of some of the most prominent men belonging to that vast collection known as the dangerous classes of New York.

When a police officer, or a detective collared one of these fellows, some man "wanted" for a big crime, for they rarely attempted to seize any "two-penny rascals," within the limits of the Bloody Sixth, his associates seemed to fairly rise out of the ground to oppose the arrest.

From the windows the women hurled brick-bats and all sorts of missiles upon the heads of the officers, and it generally took a small army of men to secure a prisoner.

The fame of the Bloody Sixth Ward has vanished before the march of modern improvement.

No more do tales of officers assaulted and half or wholly killed in the discharge of their duty, or vivid descriptions of the bloody battle between the Dead Rabbits and the Bowery Boys, the two rival clans who disputed the supremacy of the ward, fill the columns of the daily newspapers.

Civilization shakes hands with itself and cries out that crime has been stamped out, and the rascals transformed into honest men.

But it isn't anything of the kind, as any well-informed police official or diligent reporter can testify.

Crime and the criminal classes are like a virulent sore upon the body corporate.

The foul matter comes to the surface; strong medicines are applied and the sore disappears.

It is cured?

Not at all!

It is simply driven inward to appear at some other spot.

The name of the Bloody Sixth is no longer a by-word and a reproach to the city, but the criminal classes still exist, stronger and more dangerous than ever.

They have only been driven to other quarters by the strong arm of the law.

The Fourth Ward is one of the smallest in the city, lying along the river front on the east side of town, a squalid, miserable quarter, where the honest poor, by the dire stress of poverty, are driven to herd in the most miserable kind of tenement-houses with wretched outcasts from every land and crime-stained criminals, ranging from the boy thief, who pilfers from the street stands, to the desperado and burglar who would not hesitate at any moment to commit murder to obtain ten dollars' worth of plunder, provided there was the smallest chance of escaping.

In this district, too, are a large number of sailor boarding-houses, some of them respectable places, and others the vilest dens that man ever entered.

Poor Jack, fresh from sea, with his wages in his pocket, if he is once induced to enter one of these caverns of despair never gets out while he has a cent of money left.

If he is not robbed outright of his money, he is induced to drink, and so his hard earnings are filched from him.

Take three specimen blocks in this ward, Cherry street from Roosevelt to Catherine, visit it about nine o'clock on a pleasant evening, and you will see there a sight that you could hardly believe could exist in a great city like New York.

Talk about the slums of London, or the dens of Paris, we can match them here right in our Metropolis, for great Gotham in this respect is not a whit behind her elder sisters.

The looker-on will see vice so openly flaunted in his face that his heart will grow sick at the sight.

Not only old and hardened wretches, but chil-

dren of tender years, both girls and boys, already far advanced on that broad avenue that leads directly to the gates of hell.

Oh, let us send more money and men abroad to convert the heathen of far-off lands, nor waste a thought upon these miserable wretches, sinking in the whirlpool of vice right in our midst.

And, gentle stranger, have a care! If you take a tour of inspection after nightfall in this locality, wear not costly raiment, nor glittering diamonds; show not the color of gold, for it will be as much as your life is worth.

You will be keenly scrutinized by the eyes of desperate men and women, who possess as little pity as the ravaging wolves, and who will rend and tear a prey with as little remorse as a hungry tiger.

The water is near at hand, the deep, ever-moving arm of the sea known as the East river; the tides are always sweeping up and down.

It is an easy matter to slip a body into the water from the end of some deserted pier, when the mantle of night vails the earth, and who is the wiser?

In a week or a month, maybe, the sea gives up its dead.

The body is bruised almost beyond recognition by the action of the waves, the attacks of the fishes, or by bumping against the wharves or other obstructions.

The papers chronicle:

"The body of an unknown man was taken from the water yesterday. No valuables, or papers to denote who he was, were upon the corpse. It was taken to the Morgue."

At the dead-house it is kept for a brief period and then carried away to a pauper's grave.

And in some far Western town, or distant Eastern hamlet, or perchance across the stormy seas, a sorrowing wife, mourning mother and anxious children wait for the husband, son, or parent, who will never return, having fallen a victim to these modern Thugs, who render the life of a stranger so unsafe in our great Metropolis.

But now for our tale.

It is a little after nine at night, and a couple of well-dressed gentlemen both of whom had evidently imbibed more liquor than was good for them, proceeding through Cherry street attracted general attention.

And no wonder, for one of them was well-known Bristol Bill, probably the most expert and daring scoundrel that overclothed England ever sent to our shores.

And there was hardly a man, woman or child in the street, that did not recognize, at the first glance, this hero of a hundred crimes.

Bristol Bill was the champion of his class. Head and shoulders he stood above any other rascal in the country, in the estimation of the police and the men who make up the criminal classes.

He had not only the courage of a bull-dog, but the brains of a statesman, and the cunning of a criminal lawyer as well.

A good-looking, gentlemanly-appearing man of about forty; no one not acquainted with the man could possibly have guessed, after the closest inspection, that they were looking upon the most notorious criminal of the age.

A lucky man, too—so lucky that the more superstitious of his associates declared that at an early period of his career he must certainly have entered into partnership with the devil, or else he never could have got on so well.

But the spirits to whose aid Bristol Bill owed all his success were the twin brothers, Audacity and Caution.

He was as reckless as though he bore a charmed life, and yet he never entered upon an enterprise until he had carefully examined it in all its bearings, and once embarked he left nothing undone to make the scheme a success.

Of course Fortune does not smile always on the best of men, and there had been times when, owing to the chance of accident, things had gone wrong.

The satellites of the law had closed in upon him in half a dozen cases, and he had fought with the desperation of a tiger brought to bay, and never yet in his career of crime had he been caught red-handed in an offense, so successful had he been in either evading or beating off the officers.

Naturally, the appearance of Bill in company with a well-dressed young man, a blood, evidently, and somewhat the worse for liquor, amused the denizens of the locality.

Clearly, Bristol Bill had picked up a flat and was steering him to some convenient place where he might be robbed at leisure—and murdered, without fear of detection, if he objected to the operation.

Bill guided his companion along the street until they came to a saloon which displayed a gaudy red light before its door, and from the interior came the sounds of a harp and violin.

A couple of wandering Italian minstrels were stationed inside to furnish music for the customers.

"I say, let's go in here and see what the place is like," Bristol Bill suggested, as he and his companion came up to the saloon.

"All right," replied the other, with a hic-

cough, which seemed to indicate that he had taken all the liquor he could stand.

The two entered the saloon.

Bristol Bill nodded to the proprietor, a short, thick-set Irishman, with a fiery-red head and a bristling mustache of the same hue, like an old acquaintance.

"It's too public here," Bill said to his companion, as he glanced around the room. "Let's go in back to the private apartment; we can have a bottle of wine in peace and quiet there."

"That's the kind o' talk I like—bottle of wine—two bottles o' wine, first-rate!" replied the other, and just then he made a stumble and but for the support of Bill's arm would have fallen.

"Take care, old fellow, this floor is deuced uneven," the master-scoundrel cautioned.

"Yesh, so it is—deuced uneven," mumbled the other.

"Come along, then; I'm posted; I've been here before."

Then Bristol Bill conducted his companion out into the entry, like one well acquainted with the way; and no wonder, for this low den was the rascal's chief resort when obliged to keep shady and out of the sight of the officers of the law for any length of time, and there wasn't a soul in the house but was eager to do his bidding.

CHAPTER III.

A SURPRISE.

THE room into which Bristol Bill took the young man was a medium sized apartment situated in the rear of the house, on the first floor.

It was plainly furnished, all the articles within the room betraying signs of long wear.

There was an old-fashioned mahogany table in the center of the apartment, in which some reckless fellow had cut deep gashes apparently for mere amusement, or possibly for the purpose of discovering whether it was really mahogany or not.

An antique, hair-cloth sofa, a few chairs, companion-pieces to the sofa, and an extremely odd-looking high-backed arm-chair, a relic of a far-distant age, a massive, cumbersome piece of furniture, such as is seldom seen outside of an old curiosity-shop.

The two windows in the back of the room were covered by heavy curtains, so it was impossible for any one without to see what transpired within.

A plain, two light gas fixture, pendent from the ceiling, directly over the table afforded light.

"Now then, James, my boy, this is what I call comfortable!" Bristol Bill exclaimed, after they had entered the room. "Take the arm-chair, old fellow! There it is, right at the table, just as if it had expected you!"

"And I'll give the tipple a name this time myself, and it shall be fiz—the real genuine old gooseberry!"

And Bill seized the small hand-bell that was on the table and rung it lustily.

His companion in the meantime sunk into the arm-chair, which being provided with heavy cushions felt decidedly comfortable.

"Fiz is first-rate," remarked the young man, with a thickened tongue, his articulation plainly betraying that he had had all the drink that was good for him.

An ill-looking young man, with a bullet head, the hair cropped, Sing Sing style, promptly made his appearance.

"A quart bottle of fiz, Johnny, and look sharp about it, too!" Bill ordered.

The waiter ducked his bullet head and retired.

"Fiz is the stuff—first-rate," remarked the young man, having evidently arrived at that state when ideas were as hard to get as to express.

"Oh, we'll make a night of it so long as we have commenced!" Bill exclaimed, no more the worse for the strong drink which he had taken than if it had been so much water.

"Big thing—make a bully night of it," hiccuped the other.

The waiter returned with the champagne and glasses, placed them upon the table, then uncorked the bottle and served the sparkling fluid.

"Here's the rhino and a quarter for yourself, Johnny," said Bill.

The waiter pocketed the money with a grin, ducked his head and retired.

Hardly had the door closed behind him when Bill pretended that he wanted to say something to the waiter, and setting down the glass which he had just raised to his lips, hurried after him.

"Here, Johnny!" he cried, as he opened the door and looked into the entry; but the man was out of sight.

"I wanted to tell him to fetch us another bottle in fifteen or twenty minutes," he explained to his companion when he returned to the table.

But it wasn't anything of the kind.

It was a dodge to get an opportunity to lock the door, which he performed in the most adroit manner, the lock, contrary to what might be expected in such a house, being a modern one,

and the key moved in its wards without a particle of noise.

It was an old trick of Bristol Bill's and had never failed to work in the most satisfactory manner.

In this case, although satisfied that his prey was too much under the influence of liquor to trouble his head about the matter, even if he had locked the door openly, yet he had acted with his usual caution.

Great was his astonishment then upon returning to the table to discover that an entirely different expression was upon the face of the man whom he had destined for his victim.

Bristol Bill was not a man easily surprised, and even if he was, his wonderful nerve was such that he seldom showed it, but this time he did.

"You did that trick very neatly, Bill," remarked the young man, all traces of intoxication having disappeared as if by magic.

"Very neatly, indeed," he continued, "and if I had not watched you as narrowly as a cat watches a mouse I should not have tumbled to the thing."

"What do you mean?" cried Bristol Bill, completely at a loss to know what to make of this strange affair.

"Why, you have locked the door; having succeeded in inducing the victim to go into the trap, you want to make a sure thing by cutting off all chance of retreat."

The outlaw looked at the speaker earnestly.

He was not disguised, that was plain, so his guess that the young man might be a detective, got up as a blood, expressly to trap him was not correct.

Besides, there was hardly a detective in the country that amounted to anything with whom he was not acquainted, and this young fellow was certainly a stranger to him.

The outlaw had encountered him at the Fifth Avenue Hotel that evening and perceived he was slightly under the influence of liquor, and provided too with a good big roll of bills, together with some valuable trinkets, a costly gold watch and chain, a diamond pin and ring, the two worth five or six hundred dollars, and as Bristol Bill's finances just at that period were at a low-water mark, he conceived the idea of possessing himself of the young man's valuables.

He succeeded in scraping an acquaintance with the stranger; they had indulged in several drinks together and then had taken a hack to see a little of the dark side of New York life, so it had been an easy matter to conduct the young man to the Cherry street den.

"You see in this matter I rather have the advantage of you," the other continued. "I recognized your face the moment I set eyes upon it, while, personally, you don't know me from Adam."

"Oh, is that so?" exclaimed Bristol Bill, completely mystified by the strange affair.

"Yes, sir, that's the truth, and that's the reason why I assumed the air of a man who had been drinking more than was good for him," the other replied. "I laid a trap for you and you fell into it immediately. Instead of tricking me you were tricked yourself, but that is the way it often happens in this world, Bristol Bill."

The outlaw gave a slight start, for the revelation of his name convinced him that the other really did know him.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"Your deadly foe!" responded the young man, instantly, and at the same time producing a revolver from under the table; he had improved the opportunity of Bristol Bill's back being turned to him, when the outlaw had set out to call the waiter, to draw the weapon from his pocket.

The affair grew more and more mysterious, and the desperado was utterly at a loss to know what to make of it.

One thing though was sure.

The young man had him at a most terrible disadvantage.

"What did I ever do to you?" he asked, in a savage tone, his rage excited by the fact that the other had secured an advantage, and had worked the job so cleverly, too, that Bill had not the slightest suspicion that anything was wrong until the trap was sprung.

"My name is Roland Yorke."

Bristol Bill shook his head; he had never heard the name before.

"The name is strange to you?"

"Yes, it is."

"But your name is not strange to me, William Armatage."

Bristol Bill glared hard at the speaker.

"Whether that is your real name, or merely one of your numerous aliases, I have not been able to discover, but it doesn't matter. I have learned that William Armatage and the blood-stained criminal, Bristol Bill, are one and the same, and that is all I want."

"I have hunted you down, and now the hour of reckoning has come."

"What have I ever done to you?" Bristol Bill demanded, vainly racking his brains to try and connect the speaker with some event of his past life.

"Do you remember Rosamond Kendrickson?"
The outlaw winced, despite his wonderful nerve.

The name recalled an ugly memory.

"I see you do by the expression upon your face. She was the belle of the little hamlet in which she lived, a guileless, sinless creature until you threw the baleful shadow of your presence over her young life."

"It is the old story of the serpent entering Eden. You seemed like a gentleman—you posed in that quiet little village as a city merchant, seeking recreation, and all the time you and your pals were plotting the robbery of the village bank, and for your own private amusement you won the heart of the country maiden."

"And when the robbery of the bank was accomplished, you fled with your confederates, leaving her to shame and ruin."

"She bore up for a time, for she could not bring herself to believe that the man who had won her young affections, in whom she confided as only woman can confide in man, was not a gentleman but a rascally scoundrel, not even honest with his fellow-men, but a wretch for whose person, the doors of a dozen jails were yawning wide."

"But at last the time came when the truth became known, and when her parents discovered she had become the victim of a miserable scoundrel, who had fled in fear of an outraged law, they, poor, weak-minded, bigoted fanatics, drove her forth, helpless upon the world."

"She had committed one sin, and they gave her no alternative but to commit others or die—to lead a life of shame or seek oblivion in the grave. All this was years ago. Death, no doubt, soon claimed her, but you, her destroyer, still live, and I intend to make you pay dearly for your crime!"

CHAPTER IV.

TURNING THE TABLES.

"Oh, that's what's the matter!" exclaimed Bristol Bill, drawing a long breath, evidently much relieved. "And you don't really mean to say that you have taken all this trouble about a little thing like that?"

"Do you thus characterize the ruin of a young girl's life?" cried the avenger, indignantly.

"Well, I own that it wasn't exactly the square thing, but I intended to stick to the girl and see that she got along all right," Bristol Bill replied. "The police got after me, though, on account of the bank business, and I hadn't anything to do with it, either, just happening to be in the town by accident at the time—and they made the country so deuced hot for awhile that I had to get out of it."

"When I came back I attempted to find the girl, but she was among the missing and no one knew what had become of her."

"A lame explanation!" cried the other, scornfully. "You are a double-dyed villain, and it is about time that your career of guilt came to an end."

"Well, what is your little game in this matter, anyway?" asked Bristol Bill, in a dogged tone, which seemed to indicate that he was not inclined to tamely submit.

"To deliver you up to the authorities, who are anxious to send you to the prison you so richly deserve!" the other answered, immediately.

"That is, you mean, suppose I knuckle, scared by your revolver, and surrender."

"If you do not surrender, I'll drive a ball through you with as little ceremony as though you were but a mad-dog!"

"You feel perfectly sure about doing that little job right up to the handle and no mistake!" cried Bill, a sneer upon his lips.

"Most certainly I do. I've a couple of detectives watching the house on the outside, and you must not think that your associates will be able to rescue you, for the officers are armed and will not hesitate to use their weapons."

"Suppose I show fight, and your revolver misses fire—what then?" questioned the outlaw.

"If you are willing to run the chances on that, I am," the young man replied, and there was an earnest look in his eyes, and a grim expression about his resolute mouth which plainly revealed to Bristol Bill—an excellent judge of character—that the other was determined to capture him even at the risk of life.

"You have me in a tight place, and having got the deadwood on me, of course I shall have to squeal; but I say, who are you, anyway?"

"You have worked this job slick enough, and though I am not given to boasting, I am proud to say that this is the first time Bristol Bill was ever brought to bay by a single man."

"I am only an amateur in that line, but I believe I have some little talent in that direction, and henceforth I will adopt the business."

"Yes; and call yourself the 'Dandy Detective,' and 'The City Thoroughbred,' and 'The Genteel Spotter,'" exclaimed Bristol Bill, with a jaering laugh. "There's fine titles for you!"

"Whatever I may be called, I will try to make a name that rascals of all grades will tremble to hear!" the young man replied, with firm determination.

"Oh, the Dandy Detective is the name; that fits you exactly, and you will make a name too, if you are not cut off in the flower of your youth, for see how easily you pulled the wool over my eyes, and led me like a lamb to the slaughter, the first man, as I told you, that ever took me into camp, single-handed."

"That's a big feather in your cap as a starter, young man. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the outlaw laughed as if he had given utterance to an excellent joke.

Yorke looked surprised, for he could not understand what had got into the fellow.

Then there was a sudden "click, click!" as if some delicate machinery had been set in motion.

Roland Yorke was leaning back in the big chair, his arms resting upon the chair-arms, which were unusually high.

Out from the chair came steel bands which coiled like so many serpents around the arms, the wrists, the legs and the neck of the man-hunter.

The piece of furniture had been modeled on the old fashioned torture-chair which in by-gone days played so prominent a part in the proceedings of the secret tribunals presided over by the black-robed ministers of the Inquisition.

Rowland Yorke was entrapped.

He could not move either hand or foot, and as he had neglected to cock the revolver, he was utterly helpless.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bristol Bill, as he moved to the side of the prisoner and tore the revolver out of his hand; "the tables are turned now, my lad, I fancy, and Bristol Bill is not so much of a prisoner as he was."

"You are completely in the snare! You might yell and scream at the top of your lungs and no one would hear you."

"The walls are thick, the entry guarded by double doors, the music is in full blast in the saloon, the men and girls are dancing there, and nothing short of a steam-whistle screeching in here would be able to attract attention from any one outside."

"You have heard of the old saying of the trapper entrapped? It fits your case exactly."

The young man bore the surprise like a hero; not a muscle of his face betrayed a sign of fear.

When the steel bands had first clasped his limbs he had attempted to struggle, but desisted in a moment, having satisfied himself that the strength of a giant would hardly have sufficed to burst the bonds which restrained his freedom.

Bristol Bill had watched him closely, expecting an outcry, and was surprised to see how calmly he took the matter.

"Well, you're a plucky rooster anyhow," he muttered. "Say, have you any idea what I'm going to do with you?" he asked.

"No, not the slightest," the other replied, in a perfectly calm voice, and without evincing a particle of fear.

"Of course you understand that thinking you to be a young blood with more money than brains, I brought you into this room with the intention of helping myself to your valuables."

"As you have doubtless guessed, for I am inclined to think you have a little more brains than the average man, this room is a den, expressly fitted for the purpose of plundering men with money enough on their persons to make it worth my while."

"The wine in the bottle is not drugged, for if I happen to get hold of a fellow whose head is not entirely gone, he would instantly suspect that something was wrong if I pressed him to drink and refrained from indulging myself, but the man drinks hocused wine all the same though."

"If you glance carefully at the bottom of one of the glasses you will see a few drops of a colorless liquid there; it looks like water, but it isn't; it's a drug, potent enough to throw the strongest man off his balance."

"It is always easy enough to force that glass on the victim, and do the trick so neatly, too, that he will not suspect the glass was forced on him, but thinks he took it of his own free will."

"Once he drinks he is gone."

"Then, if he is not in that chair, I put him in it."

"A touch of my foot on a secret spring here under the table set the machinery to work that nabbed you so nicely."

"Another spring puts into operation another bit of machinery that operates the trap, worked on the elevator plan, so the chair descends through the floor into the cellar, and there the man can be operated upon at leisure."

"There are cases when it is necessary that the plundered man should never come alive out of that cellar."

"It is easily arranged, too, and without putting any one to the necessity of shedding the blood of the victim."

"The cellar is the resort of an enormous number of rats, great overgrown fellows, with teeth as sharp as razors, the rodents that scamper about the docks at night."

"When the stranger is left alone in the dark-

ness, these vermin come from their holes and pounce upon the helpless man with the ferocity of tigers long deprived of food."

"I suppose you will hardly believe me when I tell you that I have known them to make so complete a meal of a man in one night that when I went in the morning there wasn't a particle of flesh upon his white and glistening bones."

Despite his firm nerves, Roland Yorke could not repress a shudder as Bristol Bill, with studied coolness, told his tale.

"It makes your blood run cold and your flesh creep eh, when you reflect upon it?" cried Bristol Bill, with a fiendish smile.

"Well, that's the way I serve inquisitive detectives who run me too close."

"No man ever yet brought me to bay that he did not disappear, and no one could discover how or where he died."

"That's the kind of a reputation I am working to gain. The man who attempts to follow me goes to certain death!"

"So, good-by to you, Mr. Roland Yorke!"

The master scoundrel pressed the spring, and slowly the chair descended into the cellar.

The cellar was a deep one, and the air was foul and thick.

The rats scampered to their holes in a perfect swarm, as the chair descended and the light from the trap-door dimly illuminated the foul pit, but so fearless were they of intrusion that they did not entirely retire but crouched at the entrance of their holes and gazed with glistening eyes upon the helpless man, just as if they knew he was destined for their prey.

The outlaw peered down through the hole in the ceiling, and laughed in fiendish glee.

"You sought me—you found me, and now when you feel the teeth of the rats meet in your flesh, think of Bristol Bill!"

The trap closed, and utter darkness reigned.

CHAPTER V.

IN DESPERATE PERIL.

A MORE fearful position for a human being than that in which the young man found himself, when the trap-door in the ceiling closed and the place was plunged into utter darkness, could not be imagined by the most fertile mind.

The darkness was as intense as that which descended upon the land of Egypt in the days of yore.

As old sailors are apt to say of a sea-fog it seemed to be so thick that it could be "cut with a knife," like a tangible object.

But it was not alone the darkness that filled the mind of the young man with terror.

Human nature, weak in spite of all its strength, is apt to fall a prey to a thousand fears when exposed to an invisible danger.

During the brief interval that the cellar had been dimly illuminated by the light coming from the open trap-door, the young man, who was blessed with a wonderful sharp pair of eyes, had not failed to note all the surroundings.

He had caught sight of the rodents—the big-whiskered, savage-looking rats—peeping from their holes, and in his imagination, now that darkness hid them from his eyes, he thought he could hear them licking their chops in anticipation of the feast which had been provided for them.

"The detectives were right when they warned me of the peril which I was braving in attempting to capture this scoundrel!" he exclaimed, musing aloud in an ordinary tone of voice, for the idea had entered his head, that as long as he talked the rats would not dare to attack him, for he thought he remembered that he had either heard or read somewhere the statement that all such vermin were terribly afraid of the sound of a human voice.

And so he made up his mind to hold a conversation with himself as long as his voice held out.

"The detectives were correct when they said that this man was a very king of rascals, and yet, smart as he is, I succeeded in hoodwinking him.

"He had not the slightest suspicion that I was other than what I represented myself to be until I threw off the mask."

"If it had not been for this cunningly-contrived scheme, which it was beyond the wit of man to guard against, unless previously warned, I should most certainly have captured him."

"The Genteel Spotter he suggested will be a good name for me."

"The remark was maliciously made, for he believed I was doomed to a certain death at the time he uttered it."

"But am I? Is there not a chance of escape from this terrible trap left open to me?"

"Ob! what a glorious revenge it would be to get out of this scrape, and then be able to hunt this scoundrel to his doom!"

"And if I do escape—if I succeed in evading grim death, who now seems so near that I can almost fancy I feel his icy breath blowing upon my forehead, I swear I will devote the rest of my life to hunting down these villains who make a practice of defying the law."

"I will make the name of the Genteel Spotter so well known that the boldest rascal in the country will tremble at the sound of it."

"Oh, there must be some way to escape from this trap!" he exclaimed, abruptly, exerting all his strength to break the steel bands which held him so securely.

He was amazingly strong, too, despite his delicate appearance.

Not one man in ten thousand would have given him credit for being one-half as strong as he really was.

His muscles were like great bunches of steel, and he was in perfect condition, there not being a pound's weight of superfluous flesh upon him.

But not even the strength of a giant, unless he was a miracle of a man, like Samson of old, could prevail against the bands that held the prisoner.

He strained and tugged until the perspiration started from every pore.

The attempt was fruitless, and at last, exhausted by the superhuman efforts he had put forth he desisted.

For a few moments utter silence reigned, and then to the quick ears of the captive came the patter of a score or two of little feet upon the floor.

The rats, emboldened by the silence, were advancing upon their prey.

Exhausted by the terrible struggle which he had made to break the bonds which held him prisoner, the young man remained quiet for a few moments.

The rodents, growing bolder and bolder, swarmed around him, and some, more savage than their fellows, leaped upon the sides of the chair, or crawled up his legs.

Then the desperate man shouted at the top of his lungs, and the rats, scared by the sound of the human voice made haste to retreat.

"Oh, merciful Heaven! can there be a more horrid torture than this devised by the mind of either man or fiend?" the prisoner cried, in agony.

"I have frightened them away for the time being, but soon that device will fail to exert any power over them."

"It will not take these miserable vermin long to learn that I am utterly helpless—that I can cry out and that is all."

"Then they will swarm over me by the hundreds, and with their sharp teeth tear my living flesh."

And a shudder of horror convulsed his frame as he reflected upon the terrible doom which seemed so certain.

What possible way was there to escape the fate to which the merciless Bristol Bill had doomed him?

The sound of his voice had only scared the rats away from his immediate vicinity. They had not retreated far, for the prisoner's hearing, now rendered doubly acute by the terrible position in which he was placed, could detect the patter of the almost noiseless feet upon the damp earth which formed the floor of the cellar, and so great had the strain upon his nervous system become that he was sure he could distinguish a hundred pair of little gleaming eyes, glaring at him in feverish impatience in the darkness.

"I shall soon go mad!" the prisoner exclaimed, his voice sounding hoarse and unnatural even in his own ears.

"I shall not know how horrible my death really is, for I shall be a raving lunatic long before the rats with their sharp teeth tear my life away," he continued. "Oh, I would freely give ten years of my life to escape from this trap, so that I could hunt down Bristol Bill, and bring him to the scaffold he so richly deserves."

His mouth began to feel dry and parched and it was with difficulty he spoke.

In the last half-hour the exertion and suspense of an ordinary lifetime seemed compressed.

"It is only a question of minutes now!" he cried. "Only a question of minutes before these disgusting vermin will be feasting on my flesh, tearing it away, piecemeal!

"Oh! for one more chance to measure strength with this desperate scoundrel—one more chance for honesty to grapple with crime!"

Again he paused, exhausted, and he understood that he would not be able to talk much longer.

Already his tongue seemed to be too big for his mouth, and although he felt sure it was more imagination than anything else, yet he was not able to get rid of the idea.

Then, all of a sudden, there came a startling interruption to the current of his thoughts.

Some large animal seemed to have bounded into the cellar.

The rats scampered away with shrill screams of terror, and from the sound of the cries, the prisoner judged that the unknown beast had hurt some of the rodents.

Amid the cries of the rats, whose "seance" was thus rudely interrupted, came the sound of low, savage growls, and the young man thought he could hear the teeth of the intruder crunch together as they met in the carcass of some unlucky rat, not swift enough of foot to escape from the unknown foe.

This strange struggle in the dark only lasted for a few minutes, and then all the rats, who had not fallen by the teeth of the intruder, hav-

ing escaped into their holes, there was no more left for the brute to destroy.

"Saved for the present, thank Heaven!" ejaculated the prisoner, an immense weight being removed from his mind.

"But what, in the name of all that is wonderful, is this thing that has come so timely to my rescue?"

"By the sound of the growls I should take it to be a dog, and a good-sized one, too, but how on earth did he get into the cellar, and what color is he, for I can't make him out in the darkness any more than I could the rats?"

But now the prisoner, his attention acutely alive to all the surroundings, fancied that he could detect a current of cool air—a sort of a wind—blowing through the cellar, which he had not noticed before.

"There must be an open door in the rear of the cellar, for I am sure the wind comes from that direction," he mused.

"And through the door the dog must have found his way; that is, if it is a dog, and it certainly sounded like one."

"The brute must have pushed the door open, having smelt the rats, but I wonder that Bristol Bill should be careless enough to allow the door to be unlocked."

"But then, what difference did it make? I am helpless as a new-born babe in the steel embraces of this chair, and could not have escaped if there had been forty open doors in the place."

At this point a chill of horror ran rapidly through the prisoner's veins.

The mysterious brute who had dispersed the rats so quickly, after sniffing about the legs of the prisoner, had abruptly stood upon his hind legs, placed his forepaws upon the young man's knees, and then put his cold nose against one of his manacled hands.

CHAPTER VI. THE DOG'S OWNER.

FROM the manner in which the brute acted the prisoner became convinced that it was a dog, and from the quick dispatch which he had made of the rats it was probable he was an animal used to killing vermin, and his natural instincts had brought him into the cellar.

"Good dog, good dog!" exclaimed Yorke, in the caressing tones usually used when a human wants to impress upon a canine that his intentions are perfectly friendly.

He was sorely afraid, now that the brute had put the rats to flight, that he might take it into his head to depart, and if he did, the rats would be certain to return, and then his position would be as bad as before.

He was like a doomed man who had only been granted a respite, not a pardon.

"Is there any possible way by means of this dog by which I can convey to the detectives without a knowledge of my position?" the prisoner cried, racking his brain to solve the difficult problem.

But as he was bound hand and foot, not able even to move his head more than an inch or two from side to side, so closely did the steel band compass his neck, to get at the dog in any way was utterly impossible.

The brute, after sniffing at the prisoner's hand for a moment or two, got down and began to explore the room.

Yorke groaned aloud in agony.

"Oh, merciful Heaven!" he exclaimed. "Am I indeed doomed to die here in this miserable way? Am I to be only mocked with the hope of escape?"

Hardly had the words left his lips when some one at a distance chirruped as if calling the dog.

The heart of the prisoner gave a great bound.

The brute had an owner, and the dog was being sought.

The call was given in a falsetto voice, so it was evident that the person who was after the animal was either a boy, a girl, or a woman.

From any one of the three he might expect to receive aid, while if the caller had been a man he was more likely to prove a foe than a friend.

The chirrup was repeated, this time much nearer than before, and it was evident that the person who gave utterance to the sound was approaching the cellar.

"I believe that Heaven has listened to my supplications and deliverance approaches," the prisoner murmured, his spirits so elated at the prospect that all the agony through which he had passed was forgotten.

Then to his ears came the sound of light footsteps, proceeding cautiously, as though the person from whom the noise proceeded was feeling the way in the dark, and Yorke fancied too that he could distinguish the rustle of a woman's dress.

"If it is either a girl or a woman I shall be rescued from this terrible plight beyond the shadow of a doubt," he muttered.

The footsteps came near and nearer, the rustle of the dress, evidently rubbing against the walls of some narrow passage, more and more distinct, until at last Roland Yorke was sure that the new comer had entered the cellar, for she paused as if endeavoring to pierce the intense darkness with her gaze.

"Well, I declare, if I don't believe this is another cellar!" cried the new-comer, evidently halting on the threshold, in tones which clearly betrayed she was a young girl, but little more than a child.

"If this don't beat all that I ever heard tell of in my born days!" continued the speaker. "And the idea of that beast dog smelling his way into this place!"

"I suppose it's full of rats, and he's a ratter from Ratterville, and don't you forget it!"

A child in years, but a woman in knowledge, evidently, as most of the poor waifs who are reared in the poor quarters of a great city generally are.

The street life of a great city forces forward into a premature maturity the children exposed to its influence as surely as the hotbed does the plant.

"Here you, Nip, Nip, where are you? Come here, you black rascal!"

The dog obeyed the injunction, but after fawning around the girl for a few minutes, left her and, returning to the prisoner, commenced to snuff around his legs.

The intelligent brute seemed to understand that something was wrong, and he was anxious to call the young girl's attention to the helpless man.

"Where on earth have you gone?" asked the girl, astonished at the behavior of the dog.

For answer the brute gave a low whine.

The girl, who thoroughly understood the dog, comprehended at once that this meant something was wrong.

"Hey, Nip, you black beauty, what's the matter with you? What's broke, anyway?"

Yorke thought he would now venture to speak, although he was afraid that the girl might be frightened and take to her heels at the sound of his voice.

"Don't be frightened, young lady," Yorke said. "Your dog has discovered me and he don't exactly know what to make of it."

There was a moment of silence, and the prisoner conjectured that the girl was straining her eyes endeavoring to make out where he was; then she spoke:

"Afraid? not much! that ain't the kind of hair-pin I am!" and from her clear, resolute tones it was evident she was a decidedly plucky girl.

"I am glad to hear it," the prisoner responded, his spirits rising, for it seemed probable that through the girl's aid he would be able to escape from the fate to which he had been doomed by the merciless outlaw whom he had hunted to his lair.

There was only one thing that could interfere with his escape.

He would be obliged to explain to the girl how it happened that he came to be in the cellar, fastened to the chair.

If she was in any way connected with the scoundrels, who clearly acknowledged Bristol Bill for their chief, she would not be apt to aid in baffling the plans of that master-rascal.

But Roland Yorke had got the idea into his head that the girl was not in any way connected with the gang captained by Bristol Bill, but had found her way into the cellar by accident.

Certainly she did not know of the use which the outlaws made of the cellar, or else she would not have been surprised at his presence there, as it was evident she was.

"I am in great distress and I'm urgently in need of aid," the prisoner continued.

"Where are you, and what's the matter?"

"I am here, about the center of the cellar, sitting in a chair to which I am fastened by steel bands, so that I am unable to move either hand or foot."

"Gracious me!" exclaimed the girl, in amazement, "you don't say so!" Why, ain't that queer? And what does it mean?—how did you come to be in such a fix?"

"I have been engaged in a little detective business and was unlucky enough to be caught in a trap by the man I whom was trying to hunt down.

"He was a smarter rascal than I imagined, and when I fancied I had him dead to rights, as the saying is, threw off my assumed character and told him that he was my prisoner, by a cunning mechanical device he contrived to fasten me with steel bands to the old-fashioned chair upon which I sat, so that I was as helpless as an infant.

"The tables were turned in a manner that was to me extremely disgusting.

"Then by means of another mechanical device, the chair and myself were lowered into this noisome cellar, and I was left in the darkness here to be devoured by the rats.

"The vermin were already swarming to the attack when your dog came to the rescue."

"I bet you!" the girl cried, exultingly. "He's a terror, Nip is, a reg'lar terror, and don't you forget it, either!"

"He can kill more rats in less time than any dog that ever went on four legs.

"But who is the man that you were after?"

"Bristol Bill."

The girl indulged in a low whistle, intending by this means to express great astonishment.

"Bristol Bill, eh?"

"Yes, Bristol Bill; do you know him?" the prisoner asked.

"Well, I reckon I do, and a downright bad egg he is too; but I say, Mister Man, it seems to me that you were anxious to tackle big game when you got after such a man as Bristol Bill."

"Are you a reg'lar detective?"

"No, only an amateur."

"That accounts for it, for I guess that there ain't any of the reg'lar gang anxious to go for him without having all the odds on their side. I'll bet there ain't any single one cares to tackle him!"

"I hope you are not an ally of this scoundrel?"

"Not much, for I'm on the square, I am, every time. My name is Nan, and I sells papers for a living. I come from the old barracks next door, visiting a friend who occupies a ground-floor parlor next to the roof, me and my dog."

"Nip is my dog, you know; he's a bull-terrier and as black as black can be, and death on rats."

"He's been off his feed for a day or two, so I thought I'd take him down in the cellar and let him have some fun."

"I thought maybe if he killed a few rats he would feel better, but the first thing I knew he pawed right through an old door into this cellar, and I followed after."

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED OBSTACLE.

"It was the hand of Heaven that led the dog hither!" the prisoner exclaimed. "For had it not been for his timely arrival the teeth of the rats by this time would undoubtedly have been tearing into my flesh, and I as powerless to fight against their attacks as an infant."

"Isn't it perfectly awful?" the girl exclaimed, "and wasn't it lucky that I should take it into my head to bring the dog down into the cellar? It's mighty strange, too, for it's the first time I ever did it."

"Nobody ever uses the cellar or comes down into it either, I guess, for the stairs are so worn out that they're fit to break your neck."

"I didn't bring any light for fear of scaring the rats away, and there's an iron grating in the street that lets some little light into the place, and as there's a good deal of the cat about me I managed to see pretty well in there; but this hole is so dark that I don't believe I could see my hand if I held it up."

"I s'pose the first thing I had better do would be to run and get a candle so as to be able to see what I am doing."

"Yes, that would be advisable, and be careful of course not to mention to any one that you know I am here," the prisoner cautioned.

"Oh, don't be afraid! I know enough to keep my mouth shut. I haven't been running 'round Cherry street since I was knee-high to a grasshopper for nothing."

"If I was to say anything to anybody it's big odds that I might stumble on some pal of Bristol Bill, for he's got a heap of friends round this neighborhood."

"Say, you're fastened in with steel bands, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Do you s'pose I'll have to get a file to cut them?"

"No, I think not. They are worked by machinery, and when you get a light you will undoubtedly be able to discover the lever which when moved will spring the bands back again into the chair, just as they were when I uncautiously sat down in it, without the remotest idea that I was placing myself in a trap."

"It was a reg'lar cute dodge, but they say that Bristol Bill is always up to all sorts of tricks of that kind."

"It will not take me long to get a candle for I've got one up in my room and although it is at the top of the house, the first floor next to the roof, I'm as spry as a cat and will be back in no time."

"I do not think that we need to worry ourselves at all about time," Roland Yorke remarked. "My executioner will not be apt to trouble himself about me until to-morrow."

"I am securely fastened in the chair; nothing short, almost, of a miracle could save me, and as miracles are rare nowadays, any escape for me seems out of the question."

"It won't do any harm to hurry," the girl responded. "Some of the gang might take it into their heads to come down and take a look at you. Bill always has a big crowd with him. He's a regular king among the thieves, and there ain't a blessed one of them, too, that dares to do anything when he tells them not to do it."

"If one of his gang tried to be his own boss for a while, Bill would 'knock him out' quick'er'n a wink."

"I'll leave Nip here to take care of the rats, for they're such bold things they would be apt to go for you the moment the dog got out of sight."

"You're a good girl, and if I succeed in get-

ting out of this scrape, there isn't anything in this world, that lies within my power, that I wouldn't do for you."

"Oh, that's all right!" the girl replied, in her careless, independent way.

"I'm a-doing this for fun, you bet! and that's the kind of an ash barrel I am!"

"Lie down, Nip, like a good dog, and mind the gentleman until I come back!"

The dog immediately obeyed, for the energetic whacks of his tail on the earth as he crouched upon the floor close to the chair, and wagged his "narrative" vigorously, could be distinctly heard.

"Good-by; I will not be long, for I'm a regular lightning girl, I am!"

And then she hastened away.

A thankful prayer escaped from the lips of the prisoner.

"I shall not perish after all!" he exclaimed.

"The fight has not ended with the first round, as Bristol Bill fondly imagines."

"I shall come up smiling for a second."

"The first trick he has gained, but the second it may be my good fortune to secure."

In derision he applied to me the title of the Genteel Spotter. I'll do my best in the future to deserve the name, and perhaps the day may come when Bristol Bill will learn to fear the man whom he thought he had conquered so easily.

Here, on the eve of my escape from a horrible death, I swear I will devote all the rest of my life, be it much or little, to hunting down and exterminating the rascals who plunder honest men under the leadership of Bristol Bill.

"One by one I will hunt them into the hands of Justice, and all of the gang will live to bitterly rue the hour when I started in upon their trail."

For once in his life Bristol Bill had committed the error of underrating a foe, but as he had so easily succeeded, thanks to the concealed machinery of the antique chair, in overcoming the avenger, who had set out to call him to an account for the wrong done to an innocent girl, he jumped to the conclusion that he was not a dangerous antagonist.

When the sound of conversation ceased, one by one the rats came peeping out of their holes, eager to begin the feast, but when they beheld their prey guarded by the muscular bull-terrier, they slunk back again in haste.

Not for the rodents was the soft flesh and warm blood of the entrapped man.

There was a small army of the vermin, but the richest feast possible wouldn't have tempted them to brave the teeth of the dog.

Meanwhile the prisoner was full of hope. He felt sure that no one would be apt to trouble themselves about him until the morning, for he was satisfied that Bristol Bill believed there was no chance of his escaping from the fate to which he had been doomed by that malignant ruffian.

He was somewhat curious in regard to the girl, who had come so opportunely to his rescue, and during her absence amused himself in speculating in regard to what she was like.

Although her voice seemed youthful, yet it was evident she was no child, for she had all the sober forethought of a woman of mature years.

Still the children of the streets age rapidly and it was not impossible that the girl might be far younger than her language indicated.

The moments passed rapidly away, for the prisoner was so busy in thought that he did not pay particular attention to the lapse of time, and before he had expected her the girl returned.

She entered the cellar with a candle in one hand and half a dozen matches in the other.

"It's all right, don't be frightened!" she said, as she came through the door.

Then she lit the candle.

"I didn't dare to turn on the 'gas' before," she explained, "for fear the light might be seen through the grating and somebody might come down to see what it meant."

"Look for the lever!" the prisoner exclaimed.

"It is probably somewhere in the front of the chair."

"There's a brass hook on the side of one of the front legs," the girl said, the object catching her eyes in an instant.

"Does it look as if it could be moved?" Roland Yorke asked.

"Yes, it looks as if it had been pulled down."

"Try and push it up then."

She obeyed the injunction and immediately the steel bands flew back.

The prisoner was free!

A sigh of relief came from his lips as he rose to his feet.

For quite a time he had fancied he would never stand erect again.

"I owe you my life!" he exclaimed to the girl, gratitude shining in every line of his face.

"Oh, don't bother about that!" she replied, in the most matter-of-fact way. "You ain't out of the fryingpan yet; maybe this little move will only get you into the fire. You've got to get into the street yet, and you can't tell how many of the gang may be hanging 'round the door until you try to get out."

"That's very true, but as I am well-armed I don't fear a dozen of them."

"Come on then, let's be gitting!"

The girl led the way.

But hardly had the girl, the man and the dog passed through the passage when a startling discovery was made.

In the other cellar, descending the stairs, was Bristol Bill and two other ruffians, both of whom betrayed in their faces that they could be relied upon to do any sort of murderous work.

The surprise was mutual, for Bristol Bill and his companions were equally as astonished as the girl and the fugitive.

Weapons were instantly drawn, and Bristol Bill with a fierce oath cried:

"Hallo, my bird! were you going to spread your wings and fly?"

It was a thrilling tableau.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ASTONISHED TRIO.

The situation seemed to be a desperate one indeed for the young detective, for opposed to him were three of the greatest ruffians that the city had ever known.

Indeed, it is doubtful if more brutal, bulldog-like fellows could be found in any part of the world.

They were all fully as well-armed as Yorke, and as they were three to one, the young detective's chance of escaping from the trap, so unexpectedly sprung upon him, seemed decidedly bad.

The unexpected appearance of Bristol Bill and his companions in the cellar is easily explained.

The two men were his intimate pals—"side-partners," as a Western man would say.

Happening to drop into the saloon just as Bill was about to depart, he could not refrain from relating to them how nicely he had tricked the detective, who had had the impudence to attempt to capture him right in his stronghold, for Bristol Bill was the real owner of the saloon, although it was carried on in another man's name.

Red Barry and Sheeny Lew were the names by which the two ruffians were known.

Red Barry was a tall, muscular fellow with red hair and a fiery red mustache.

Sheeny Lew, on the contrary, was a rather undersized man, with a foxy face and a shambling way.

As his name indicated, he came of the race of Israel, but was a most unworthy representative indeed of the Hebrew line.

After they had listened to Bristol Bill's account of the neat manner in which he had turned the tables upon the eager tracker, Sheeny Lew, who had the longest head of any of the "cross" men about town, suggested that it would be a good idea to search the detective, as it was possible he might have some important papers about him which would put them in possession of the police plans, as it looked probable that a regular raid was intended by the authorities.

Bristol Bill thought the idea was a good one, and Red Barry agreed with him—so the three descended to the cellar, going by the way of the stairs in the adjoining house.

There was no other way of getting into the underground apartment from the house to which it belonged but through the trap-door in the floor—the stairs which once led to the lower region having been purposely removed so as to prevent any inquisitive policeman from examining the cellar.

As the girl had stated, no one in the adjoining house ever used the cellar, and the door which connected the two underground apartments was fastened by what appeared to be a strong padlock and hasp, but the woodwork in which the staples were driven had rotted, and the dog in forcing his way into the cellar had easily displaced them.

Three such desperate men as now barred the prisoner's way to liberty seemed an obstacle impossible for the young detective to overcome.

In calculating the chances, the girl and the dog would hardly be taken into account by any one as being important factors in the problem.

But as in this life it is the unexpected that always happens, so in this instance the girl and dog were destined to play a more important part in the scene than any of the rest of the actors.

Hardly had the words escaped from the lips of Bristol Bill—the threat that boded death to Roland Yorke—than, with a single puff of her breath, the girl blew out the candle, plunging the cellar into utter darkness.

This was a movement for which no one of the parties was prepared, and before any one could make a motion the sharp command came from her lips:

"Sic 'em, Nip, go for 'em!"

With a series of tiger-like growls the bulldog obeyed.

The three were on the stairs, standing close together.

The dog rushed between the legs of Bristol Bill who was in the advance, nipping him in

the calf as he passed, made his teeth meet in the leg of Sheeny Lew who was next to Bristol Bill, causing that worthy to bawl with pain, and then—just as if he had calculated how best to disorganize the attacking force and clear the stairway—seized Red Barry in the calf of his right leg—the man stood with the right foot on one stair and his other on the stair above—and held on for dear life.

The result of this maneuver was that the last mentioned ruffian, shrieking with pain, and giving utterance to the most horrible profanity, lost his balance and fell headlong down the stairway, upsetting his companions who were beneath him.

The three came to the ground at the foot of the stairs all in a heap, swearing the most fearful oaths that human ears had ever heard.

The terrier relinquished his hold upon Red Barry when the three men fell and really seemed to amuse himself by seeing how many bites he could take of the prostrate men as they rolled over and over each other, striking out with their revolvers, endeavoring to hit the dog.

The terrier was perfectly impartial, and distributed his "favors" pretty evenly, nipping first one man and then the other.

And as the place was plunged in utter darkness, the ruffians in endeavoring to disable the dog by striking at him with their pistols—they did not dare to fire, for fear of shooting each other—only succeeding in biting and damaging themselves, a result which enraged them to a fearful extent, and the imprecations that they uttered were enough to make the blood of any decent person run cold.

The moment the girl extinguished the light she grasped Roland Yorke by the hand.

"Come!" she whispered, hurriedly, in his ear, "Nip understands every word I say to him, and while he is making it lively for these brutes we can get out!"

The detective resigned himself into the girl's hands; better acquainted with the cellar than he, she seemed to have the catlike faculty of seeing in the dark.

And while the ruffians were swearing and tumbling over each other on the floor, vainly trying to escape from the sharp teeth of the dog, who was worrying them just as he would have worried a lot of rats, Nan conducted Roland Yorke to the stairway.

It was an easy task to evade the scoundrels, for their cries of rage plainly revealed their whereabouts.

In their attempt to get away from the savage attacks of the dog they had rolled away from the foot of the stairs, so the fugitives were able to ascend without difficulty.

There was a door at the head of the stairs and on the outside of this door was a stout bolt. It was rusty, and evidently had not been used for years, but the girl with her wiry hands succeeded in getting it into working condition.

"I'll call the dog up, then bolt the door, and that will give us plenty of time to get out of the way," she explained.

And this movement she executed immediately.

The moment the terrier heard the call he came bounding up the stairs.

The girl shut the door and bolted it.

"Now then, I think I have got the deadwood upon them!" she cried in triumph.

"And I shall be able to capture Bristol Bill after all!" Roland Yorke exclaimed, in high glee. "There's a couple of detective officers outside waiting for me; I'll call them in and then I'll nab Mr. Bristol Bill!"

He hurried through the dark entry—for in this miserable tenement-house, inhabited only by the poorest of the poor, lights were altogether too expensive a thing to be afforded in the public entries—but when he reached the front door, which stood open, the unwelcome discovery was made that the detectives were missing.

They had waited according to orders, and not having received the promised signal had departed, thinking the plan had in some way miscarried.

But a more unwelcome discovery even than this Yorke made.

The noise of the conflict in the cellar between the men and the dog had attracted quite a crowd around the grating, a crowd composed not only of women and children, but of rough-looking, desperate appearing men, and, as the detective glanced at them, the thought came to him that these men were the very fellows likely to be the pals of such a scoundrel as Bristol Bill.

And even while he stood at the door, hid by the darkness of the entry from the crowd without, meditating what would be the best course for him to pursue, Bristol Bill made another move in this desperate game.

As soon as the dog ceased his attack the ruffians sprung to their feet, and while Sheeny Lew and Red Barry groped their way to the stairs, Bristol Bill ran to the grating.

He knew the neighborhood well enough to surmise that the noise of the fight in the cellar would be quite enough to attract a crowd to the grating, anxious to find out what it all meant.

And in the crowd he was sure some of his pals would be found.

"There's a cursed spy in the house!" he yelled. "Kill him the moment he comes through the door!"

A howl of rage arose from the throats of the crowd at this announcement, and Roland Yorke immediately realized that he could expect but little mercy at the hands of the ruffians.

Understanding this he was prompt to act.

He shut the door in an instant.

Luckily for him there was an old, rusty bolt upon it, and he hastily shoved it into its socket.

The moment the door closed the crowd without made a rush for it, for they guessed that the detective had closed the portal.

CHAPTER IX.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

WITH angry yells and blood-curdling oaths the ruffians threw themselves against the door, endeavoring to force it open, and at the same time the men on the cellar stairway were pounding away at the door there.

And as both of these barriers were old, and, therefore, somewhat frail, it was certain that very soon one or both would yield to the persistent attack.

Then the fugitive would be caught between two fires.

He must act promptly.

The girl's keen wits appreciated the difficulty of the situation, and she was quick to suggest a method of escape.

"How is the back yard—is the fence high—can I climb it?" Yorke inquired, hurriedly.

"Yes, but it would only be jumping out of the fryingpan into the fire, for all the neighborhood is alarmed now, and you would be certain to be discovered before you could get away," she replied.

"What is to be done, then?"

"Come up to the garret; no one will ever dream of looking for you there, and if by any chance it should be discovered that you are in the house, you can easily get out on the roof, and, although it would be a rough old climb, yet you could manage to get along to some of the neighboring houses."

"I shall have to thank you for my life a second time!" the detective exclaimed, as he groped his way hurriedly through the dark entry toward the stairs, following in the footsteps of the girl.

"Oh, that's all right, don't let that trouble you. You'll get a chance to get square with me one of these days!" the girl replied, carelessly, just as if risking her own life to save that of an entire stranger was a common, everyday occurrence.

"Tread lightly!" she cautioned, as she commenced the ascent of the stairs.

"It won't do to let those cross coves know of this little dodge of ours, or else all the fat will be in the fire."

"Trust me to be as cautious as a cat."

In truth, it would have required a remarkably acute pair of ears to have detected that any one was ascending the stairs, so careful were the two in their movements.

They had not started a moment too soon either, for as they got to the head of the stairs and turned in the entry—the dog trotting along demurely at their heels, apparently fully understanding the necessity for caution as well as the humans—with a crash the ruffians on the cellar stairway forced open the door.

Hearing the row that the crowd outside were making at the front door, they fell into the natural error of thinking the fugitives were holding it against the outsiders.

So they hurried forward to take them in the rear.

Then followed one of those strange mistakes that sometimes occur.

Just as the three were within a couple of yards of the front door, it abruptly gave way under the pressure from without, and the howling mob came pouring into the entry, swearing at the top of their lungs.

The entrance was effected so suddenly that the mob was upon Bristol Bill and his pals almost before they realized what had occurred.

And the moment the two parties came together, the front-door crowd fell into the natural mistake of taking them in the entry for the prey they sought, and so, despite the endeavors of Bristol Bill and his companions to make the outsiders understand that they were "true blue," the crowd fell upon them tooth and nail.

For some three minutes there was about as pretty a fight in the darkness of the entry as the most bloodthirsty mortal could desire.

Finding that the outside gang was determined to maul them, the three pals showed fight in a way that astonished the assailants.

The entry was one of the wide, old-fashioned ones, so the three had room enough "to get in their work," while the attacking crowd, all huddled together in a heap, labored under a decided disadvantage.

Bristol Bill, Red Barry and Sheeny Lew were all distinguished members of the "shoulderbitter brigade," regular slingers, every one,

and they felled the leaders of the attack with sledge-hammer-like blows.

And as the foremost men went down, those behind, pushed on by the impatient crowd, half of whom were attracted merely by curiosity to see what was going on, trampled remorselessly upon the fallen bruisers.

These, naturally, protested against such treatment, and attacked the aggressors.

So, in no time at all, there was the biggest kind of a free fight inaugurated.

Fresh men kept getting into it, forced onward by the curious crowd in the rear.

And there, in the darkness, these wolf-like men clawed and struck, bit and howled, until one would surely think that Pandemonium was let loose on earth.

Thanks to this accident, Bristol Bill and his pals were enabled to make a retreat.

They understood now that the retreat of the fugitives had been cut off at the front door by the crowd without, and they had not succeeded in getting into the street.

"Where in blazes have they gone?" growled Red Barry, as the three emerged into the back yard.

The speaker had received a violent blow on the nose in the fray and felt extremely ugly about it.

Neither one of the three had got off scot-free.

Some one had thrown a club and cracked Sheeny Lew on the head, causing him for a moment to witness a most brilliant display of stars.

Bristol Bill had the narrowest escape of the three.

One of the foremost men in the crowd had been armed with a knife, and he had slashed the master-ruffian on the arm, making quite a painful wound, although not at all dangerous.

Thanks to the lights in the windows of the houses in the neighborhood and to the moon, now just coming up full and strong, the three were enabled to see each other and ascertain what damage they had suffered.

Their first thought of course was of the fugitives, but as they were not able to secure any trace of them they came to the conclusion they had made their escape by scaling the fence that surrounded the yard.

Although when they inquired of the people who crowded all the windows in the neighborhood attracted by the sound of the disturbance, all declared that they had not noticed any one passing through the yard.

"They may have done it, all the same though," said Bristol Bill.

"If they got out before the row commenced, and it's probable they did, no one would have been apt to have noticed them passing through the yards."

"Some of these people say they have been sitting at their windows looking down into the yards for the last hour, though," Sheeny Lew remarked.

He had got the idea into his head that the people were right and the fugitives had not made their escape in that way.

"Good many folks in this world say a great deal more than their prayers," Red Barry suggested.

The big ruffian had the reputation of being a doubting Thomas.

"If he didn't get out by way of the yard he is in the house somewhere," Bristol Bill observed, with a thoughtful glance up at the building. "The detective is our mutton."

"And yet I don't understand how he can be in the house either," Sheeny Lew remarked.

"With all this row going on down-stairs it would be likely to scare the people so that they wouldn't open their doors to admit a stranger, particularly one with a howling crowd after him, anxious for his blood."

"You're right, there," Bristol Bill observed. "They'd be a mighty sight more apt to shut their doors, and if he attempted to get in, to lay him out with the first weapon that came handy."

"He couldn't have got out the front door; your little funny business at the grating put a stop to that," Sheeny Lew remarked.

"These people here say he didn't get out this way, and though the man might have climbed the fence without being noticed, yet it ain't very probable, it seems to me, that all three of them, man, girl and dog—"

"Curse the brute! he bit me in a dozen places!" interrupted Red Barry, who had had the ill-luck to get the greater part of the bites that the bull-terrier had given with such liberality.

"Couldn't have climbed the fence without somebody seeing them," continued Sheeny Lew, finishing the argument he had begun.

"It doesn't seem probable," said Bristol Bill.

"But, I say, who is the girl, and where did she come from?"

"And the dog!" cried Red Barry. "I'll kill that brute if I have to hunt ten years for him!"

"I don't know her, although it strikes me I have seen her in the neighborhood," Sheeny Lew replied.

He was constantly in the vicinity, and so was pretty well acquainted with the denizens of the locality.

"She probably lives in the house, and the

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chances are big that if we hunt her up we'll be able to find the man."

"We can get at the dog, anyhow!" cried Red Barry.

CHAPTER X. THE PURSUIT.

By the time that the three arrived at this conclusion the fight in the hallway had ended, and the crowd adjourned to the street.

Owing to the peculiar turn that affairs had taken, the original cause of the disturbance was supposed to have made his escape, for the men who had fallen by the iron-like knuckles of the three pals naturally thought that it was the police spy to whom they were indebted for the sturdy whacks.

All now being quiet, though a crowd which had been attracted by the disturbance still stood in front of the house and discussed the affair, all sorts of ridiculous rumors flying about, Bristol Bill and his companions proceeded to search for the fugitive detective.

"It will not take us long, boys, to find out whether he is in the house or not," Bristol Bill remarked as he led the way up the stairs.

It was a small building, one of the old-fashioned two-story-and-attic houses, such as the old New York burghers were in the habit of erecting a hundred years ago.

The apartments on the first floor were vacant; there were three families on the second, one to every room about, and two in the garret.

All the men were out, nobody but women and children at home, and not a single soul had seen anything of the fugitives, so they all declared.

The three men went up to the garret, and the only person they could find there was an aged Irishwoman, decidedly the worse for liquor.

She was indignant at the intrusion and rated the "murdering blaggards" so severely that even these hardened ruffians were glad to retreat, and so get out of the reach of her tongue.

They did not neglect to examine the garret thoroughly though, but this occupied but little time, as there was only a landing, upon which the moon looked down through a skylight in the roof, and two rooms, one in front and the other in the rear.

Both were open, almost bare of furniture, and could be examined at a glance.

The old woman had been half asleep in a dilapidated rocking-chair when the intruders ascended to the level of the garret, and when she was first aware of their presence, she had evidently mistaken them for the "lady" who occupied the rear garret, for she had called out:

"Is it there ye are, Mrs. Casey? Shure, you're back early, ma'am, and divil a wan of your fri'nds has been for to see yez since yez's been gone."

But when she discovered it was not "Mrs. Casey," but three rough-looking men, she had fallen into a violent rage and abused them in the most insolent manner when they inquired concerning the fugitives.

Red Barry, whose temper was none of the best at any time, but who appeared to be transformed into a very fiend by the pain of the dog-bites which had been so freely bestowed upon him, had drawn his knife and threatened to cut the old woman's throat if she did not keep quiet.

But this threat, instead of causing her to stop, only added new fury to her rage.

There was a heavy iron poker in the room, an extra-sized one, about two feet long, and this the old woman caught up at once, and then, in terse but extremely vigorous language, invited the rough to "come on."

"I'm an O'Neil! do yez mind that, ye dirthy scut! and I'm able for a dozen of the likes of yez!" and then the string of names she hurled at his head would have amazed the oldest fishwoman in existence.

But though Red Barry was just in the humor to vent his rage upon somebody, yet he did not quite see his way clear to meet the woman in single fight.

She was a muscular, raw-boned virago, and armed as she was with a heavy poker, she would have been a tough antagonist for almost any man.

Bristol Bill and his pals retired with an ill-grace; they were men who were not accustomed to take abuse with impunity from any one, and it was particularly galling to them to be thus defied twice in a single night.

First to be vanquished by a dog and then forced to retreat by an old Irishwoman, somewhat the worse for liquor! It was tough!

Bristol Bill, though, believed he had solved the mystery of the detective's disappearance.

"He made his way right up to the garret, then went through the open window in that back room to the roof," he said, as the three descended the stairs.

"And do you think the girl and the dog took the same road?" Sheeny Lew asked.

"No doubt of it; it isn't a difficult task; and it was the only way of escape left open to them."

"Do you suppose the old woman knew all about it?" Red Barry questioned.

"No, I don't think she did," Bristol Bill answered. "She was asleep at the time just as she was when we came up, and as they took care not to make any noise they succeeded in getting out on the roof without alarming her."

"And once on the roof it was an easy matter for them to get into one of the neighboring houses, through a window, and by this time they are in all probability at a good safe distance."

"The game is up then," remarked Red Barry, angrily, terribly disappointed at not being able to get at the fugitives.

"Yes, I should say so, for the present anyway," Bristol Bill replied.

"There isn't the least doubt about it," Sheeny Lew observed. "You might as well look for a needle in a bundle of hay as attempt to find that fellow after he once got out into the street."

"That's so; he has succeeded in scoring a point upon me after all," Bristol Bill remarked.

By this time they had gained the lower entry and stood looking out into the street.

"He is in possession of our little hanky-panky chair arrangement by means of which we have plucked so many pigeons, and we can't work that racket any more."

"We shall have to get up a new dodge and destroy all traces of the old before the police come down upon us."

"Sheeny, you had better attend to that. Tell the boys to clean the whole thing out so as not to leave a trace of the way in which we used to work the oracle."

"All right. It will not take long to remove everything, and I've got the stairs all ready to put back under the trap-door, so that it will appear as if the trap was merely cut to give access to the cellar."

The speaker was the man who had arranged the diabolical contrivance.

Sheeny Lew was noted among the dangerous classes, and in police circles, as being one of the most skillful mechanics in the country.

He possessed talents in that line which, if they had been employed in a proper direction, would certainly have brought him a fortune.

But, so strange is the composition of the thing that we call man, he preferred to pursue the uncertain and dangerous life of a "crook." One week so flush with money—the product of a successful expedition—that he hardly knew what to do with it, and the next, a fugitive from justice, with the bloodhounds of the law right at his heels, and dependent for protection and support upon criminals more lucky than himself for the time being.

"Well, you look after that; we can set the machinery up somewhere else and work the trick again without any trouble," Bristol Bill remarked. "And I suppose it will be only prudent for me to keep shady for a while, until I can get a chance to locate this new detective. He's a regular dandy of a fellow, boys, and after I had got him dead to rights, I suggested to him that if he was going to follow the detective line and go in to make himself a first-class police-spy, it would be a good idea for him to call himself the Genteel Spotter, the City Thoroughbred, or something of that sort. Of course I thought I had him settled for this world, but I tell you what it is, pals, there's many a slip between the cup and the lip."

"What put the fellow on your track, anyway?" asked Sheeny Lew—who, being naturally long-headed, suspected there was an important reason for the action of Bristol Bill in so persistently hunting to death the sleuth-hound of the law.

"Oh, a woman-scrape, some years ago, that's all," the other answered, carelessly.

"The fellow is doing a little on his own hook, eh?" said Red Barry.

"Yes, he has joined the detective force expressly to get square with me, and, to give the devil his due, I must say the fellow made a good beginning, for if it had not been for my getting him into the chair, thinking him to be a pigeon worth the plucking, he most assuredly would have snapped the bracelets on my wrists and carried me off to head-quarters in triumph."

"It was a narrow squeeze for you, and a still narrower one for him," Sheeny Lew remarked.

"Yes, and from now out it will be likely to be a desperate struggle between us. I must down him, or else he will be likely to down me. By the way, do either of you say you know the girl?"

"Or the dog!" growled Red Barry, savagely. "I'll never be satisfied until I have caved in the head of the infernal cur. Suppose the brute should go mad, where would we all be?"

"I think we would have a pretty lively time of it; but the girl's face seemed familiar to me, although I hardly got a good look at her," Bristol Bill said, reflectively.

"Her face seemed familiar, but I can't place her, and I'm not sure I would be able to recognize her if I met her again," Sheeny Lew observed.

"I could pick the dog, though, out of a thousand!" Red Barry declared.

"Well, let's make ourselves scarce. I'll see both of you at our up-town house to-morrow

night at nine," remarked the leader of the gang.

The others nodded, and so they parted.

CHAPTER XI.

AN OLD HIDING-PLACE.

AND now that we have related how completely the pursuers were baffled in their search for the fugitives we must return to them and describe how it was that they succeeded in so completely baffling the eager search of Bristol Bill and his associates.

As the girl explained to the detective while ascending the stairs she did not live in the house but only came there once in a while to see an old woman who dwelt in the garret.

"You see sir," she said, "everything ain't on the square 'bout me. I'm an orphan without any father or mother—that is, I suppose I am, but there's no telling, for somebody pays eight dollars a month for my keeping."

"It is paid to the old woman up-stairs, who brought me up."

"What a strange history!"

"Ain't it! But I'll spin the whole of the yarn for you some time when ther's an opportunity for you to listen to it, but we're a little too pressed for time now."

"Do you think they will pursue us up here?"

"Maybe! there's no telling 'bout it, you know. I guess they'll try the yard first, thinking we have gone over the back fence, but when they don't find any trace of us there they'll be apt to think we are in the house somewhere, and go for us."

"But we can escape by means of the roof," suggested Roland Yorke.

It was strange how in this dangerous emergency the detective, who was a man of extra shrewdness, consulted the girl, who was but little more than a child, just as if she was an old, experienced man of the world.

"We would be mighty apt to be seen by somebody, and then Bristol Bill and his gang would soon be at our heels."

Just at this point the two doors below were broken in and the conflict ensued, the particulars of which we have already related.

"Quick, quick! they are after us already!" cried the girl, while the dog gave utterance to a low, ominous growl, as much as to intimate that he was all ready for another scrimmage.

The old woman to whom the girl had referred had been sitting in a low rocking-chair by a little table, upon which burnt the commonest kind of a tallow candle, when the row broke out in the lower entry.

She had been sewing, but being overcome by slumber allowed her work to fall into her lap, and was enjoying a splendid nap when the uproar below roused her to a consciousness that something was wrong.

"Mother of Moses! what's that?" she cried, opening her eyes and glaring around her with orbs distended by amazement.

"It's all right, aunty, don't be alarmed!" the girl exclaimed, hastily. "It is only a little trouble that this gentleman has tumbled into with Bristol Bill and his gang!"

"The murthering blaggards!" cried the old woman, who thoroughly baited the ruffians who, by their evil deeds, had made the neighborhood a terror to all decent men.

"Can you hide us somewhere, aunty, in case they should take it into their heads to come up here?" asked the girl.

"Shure, and I can do that same!" answered the old woman, promptly.

"And I give you my word that you will not lose anything by aiding us!" said Yorke, impulsively.

"Sorra a thing do I want, bedad!" replied the old woman, loftily. "Shure, I'd do anything in me power to worry that thafe of the woruld, Bristol Bill."

During this brief conversation the girl had gone to the head of the stairs, and was listening with all her ears to the tremendous racket which the contending parties in their free fight in the darkness of the entry below were making.

"I don't understand it!" she exclaimed.

"They seem to be having a regular fight downstairs, and there isn't any signs that they think of following us up here."

The detective at once jumped to the right conclusion.

"It would be a joke if the party from the outside had run against Bristol Bill and his men in the dark and mistaken them for us!" he exclaimed.

"I'll bet a hat that that is just what they have done, for they seem to be going at each other tooth and nail, hammer and tongs," replied the girl.

"It will not take them long to find out the mistake, though, and then we may expect them to attempt to follow us up with ten times more vigor than before," said Roland Yorke, in a tone of conviction.

"Oh, there isn't the least doubt about that," the girl assented.

"Don't ye be afther minding the blaggards!" cried the old woman, who had evidently been indulging in more liquid stimulants than was good for her health. "To the devil I'd pitch the

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whole pack, bad 'cess to 'em for a gang of dirthy scrubs!"

"That's all right, aunty, but they will murder us all the same, if they succeed in getting hold of our precious persons, and I don't see where on earth you are going to hide us in this barracks! Why, there doesn't seem to be room here to stow away a good-sized rat, let alone such healthy-looking humans as we are," the girl observed, looking around her with a critical air.

The truth of the remark could not be disputed. In the open space between the two garrets there wasn't anything but the bare walls, the floor and the roof, while all the furniture the garrets could boast was a little cot-bed, a table and a rocking-chair in the old woman's apartment, which was the front garret, while the back room could only hold a straw mattress, placed right upon the floor, and a solitary chair, decidedly the worse for wear.

As the girl had said, an ordinary rat would have had trouble in concealing himself so as to avoid detection anywhere in the garret.

Possibly such a small animal might have got under the straw mattress and so avoided detection until the mattress was moved, but all of the three fugitives were entirely too big to hope for success in trying that game.

"Aba, wait till awhile ago!" cried the dame, shaking her head, while a look of extreme cunning appeared upon her features.

"Shure I'll be afther putting yez in a place that all the blaggards in the woruld would never find yez!"

"Well, I give it up!" the girl exclaimed, in amazement. "You're too much for me, aunty, I don't see any place where you can hide us three big critters."

"Oah! I've a beautiful place, me darlint!" chuckled the old woman.

"I'd like to know where it is," observed the girl, doubtfully.

And the detective too was equally dubious.

He had carefully surveyed the scantily-furnished apartments and was not able to find a hiding-place.

True, one might try to hide under the straw mattress in the rear garret, or think to escape observation by crawling under the cot in the front, but it would be the height of folly to try to play either of these games, for detection was certain.

"Ye don't see any hiding-place?" cried the aged dame, with a cunning leer.

"Nary place!" responded the girl, dropping into the slang way that she sometimes assumed.

"My good woman, do not trifle with us," the detective said, seriously. "This is no laughing matter—no jest! These ruffians who are following us up so closely are determined to shed our blood, and although I am armed and prepared to defend myself, yet I do not want to become involved in a fight if I can help myself, particularly when the odds are all in favor of my antagonists."

"Hould yer whist!" cried the old woman, with another knowing leer. "Ye mustn't try to tache yer grandmother to suck eggs, you know."

"I'll bide ye away where the devil himself and all his imps couldn't find yez!"

"I'll be afther putting yez in my trunk."

"In your trunk!" cried both of the fugitives in a breath.

"That is phat I sed! Mebbe ye think the likes of an old woman like meself hasn't got such a thing, bad 'cess to yer impudence!" cried the Celtic lady, with a fine show of indignation.

"But where is your trunk?" asked the girl, looking around with a bewildered expression, while Roland Yorke came to the conclusion that the old lady had taken too much liquor and didn't really know what she was talking about.

"Oh, I have a trunk, and a fine wan, too," then the dame removed a small strip of carpet, which was spread on the floor in front of the cot-bed, to one side, and pulled up two loose boards in the floor, revealing quite a cavity beneath.

"There's me trunk! there's where I put me valuables whin I go out, and devil a blaggard has been cute enough to smell them out."

It was a tight squeeze, but the three all managed to get into the cavity.

There was plenty of air, for the boards were filled with cracks, so the fugitives endured the confinement better than one would have expected.

The old woman replaced the boards and the carpet, and so it happened that the eager search of Bristol Bill and his pals came to naught.

CHAPTER XII.

NAN.

WHEN Bristol Bill and his pals retreated, the old woman followed them on tip-toe with the stealthy caution of a cat, and kept watch until she was satisfied they had quitted the house for good.

Toen she returned to the garret, moved aside the carpet, lifted the boards and cried in triumph:

"You kin come out of that, me darlin's, the

murthing blaggards have gone away, bad 'cess to them!"

The fugitives were not sorry to emerge from their narrow quarters, and even the dog seemed delighted to be released.

Warmly they expressed their thanks to the old woman for the service she had done them.

"Don't be afther saying a word, me jewels!" she exclaimed loftily.

"Shure, it's only right for all decent people to join hands ag'in' sich blaggards as Bristol Bill and his spalpeens."

"Faix! I would be a happy woman for to see that thafe of the woruld dance upon nothing wid a rope around his neck for to hold him up."

"He will come to that in time; there isn't the least doubt about it, unless some well-aimed bullet or keen-edged knife cuts the thread of his life in twain," Roland Yorke remarked.

"True for yees!" Mrs. O'Neil exclaimed. "That do be the way the most of the hard b'yes come to an ind."

"But now, me jewels, jist make yerselves comfortable here, while I do be afther seeing phat the blaggards are doing."

"Mebbe, ye know, they are lying low 'round the house somewhere, waiting for yez to come out."

"I hardly think so, granny," the girl observed "for after searching the house as thoroughly as they did, they will not be apt to be under the impression that we are still here. I guess they would all be willing to bet high that we got out while they were in the cellar."

"Mebbe yez are right, darlint, but it won't be afther doing any hurt for me to luck afther them a bit."

"There's no telling phat tricks sich blaggards will be up to."

"I'll be back as soon as I kin find out the rights of the matter."

And then the old woman departed.

The girl sat down upon the cot and motioned to the detective to take the rocking-chair by the table.

"Make yourself comfortable," she observed, in the free and easy way peculiar to her.

"From what I know of granny, I can just tell you that it will be an hour at the least before we set eyes upon her face again."

"She'll get down to the door, strike some of the other old women in the neighborhood, and then their tongues will go it in a way that will be astonishing to behold."

"I know granny of old," she declared, with a pert toss of her wise little head.

"She's generally good for an hour's gossip at the door on any ordinary night when there isn't anything in particular to talk about, but with the neighborhood in a fever over this ruction, as it is to-night, I guess I am a little too previous in thinking she will come to the scratch in an hour."

"I guess we had better say two hours, and so be on the safe side."

Roland Yorke smiled at the assumption of the girl, but as he judged she was pretty near right, he sat down in the rocking-chair and prepared to make himself comfortable.

For the first time he had now an opportunity to study at his leisure the appearance of the girl who had come so timely to his rescue.

She was *petite* in form, yet extremely well-proportioned, and looked to be about fifteen years old.

This youthful appearance was partly owing probably to the fashion in which she was attired, for the dark calico dress she wore was made in the plainest manner and only came to the top of her boots, thereby giving her a youthful appearance.

She had an odd face; it could not be called pretty, yet after a few minutes' inspection it was strangely attractive, as the young man soon discovered.

She was a pronounced brunette, with sharp black eyes, a face more oval than round, a nose which had a decided tendency to that shape which is popularly termed "pug," a skin well browned, not only by nature but by exposure to the sun as well, and her chestnut-brown hair curled in great tangled masses all over her well-shaped head, which was disfigured by a horribly battered-up hat, very much the worse for wear.

Roland Yorke studied the face of the girl for at least five minutes in perfect silence, and the longer he looked the greater his interest grew.

It was one of those rare faces which at the first glances the casual stranger would pronounce to be decidedly ugly.

"A little dark thing, with a turn-up nose, squirrel eyes and a shock head, tangled like a lion's mane," would have been the judgment of about ninety-nine people out o' a hundred.

But the hundred—the careful judge who looks beyond the mere surface, and who does not allow himself to be biased by first impressions—would have decided that the girl, if not a beauty in the rough, could, like the diamond, be polished into one.

The aid of proper costume, carefully-selected jewels, and an experienced hair-dresser, would have worked wonders in the appearance of the girl.

Such thoughts as these ran rapidly through the mind of Roland Yorke as, with earnest eyes, he surveyed the person of the girl.

She bore the scrutiny unflinchingly for a while, gazing at him with her sharp eyes as if unconscious that she was the subject of so much attention.

Then, with a quick movement of her head and just a shade of irritation perceptible in her tones, she exclaimed:

"Well, I guess you will know me again when you see me, won't you, eh?"

The detective started; he had not really been conscious that he was devoting so much attention to the girl, so interested was he in this new and novel study, until her words recalled him to himself.

"I beg your pardon!" he hastened to say. "I did not mean to offend you."

"Ob, no, of course not; I didn't think you did; but I tell you it isn't quite the cheese for a good-looking fellow like you to stare an ugly girl, such as I am, clean out of her countenance."

"But you're not ugly!"

"Oh, no, not by a jugful!" she cried, sarcastically. "There's been a heap sight uglier girls in the world than I am, but they're all dead, and you can bet high on it too."

Roland Yorke laughed; the girl was a character if there ever was one.

"Oh, you needn't think to get out of it by laughing!" she exclaimed, with a pout that was wonderfully becoming.

"I'm real mad, so now, and I don't care if you know it!"

"The idea of sitting there and staring at me just as if I was a statue put here just to be stared at!"

"Again I must beg you to forgive me; I did not really know what I was about."

"Upon my word I assure you I was not conscious that I was staring at you rudely. I became interested in your face, for it is an odd one, and before I knew I had fallen into a brown study over it, just as if you were a model sitting for a portrait and I was the artist who was to paint it."

"That's real sweet, isn't it?" and then she burst into a peal of laughter.

"I guess the artist who attempts to paint my picture will come to the conclusion long before he gets through that it is the toughest job he ever tackled.

"If he is after a girl to sit for an imp or a female devil, perhaps I might be able to fill the bill!" she added.

"Oh, no, you wrong yourself!"

"No, I don't! I know what I am as well as anybody."

"You can't give me any points on myself. I've been there every time, and I know how the cat jumps."

"I'm much obliged to you for the taffy, all the same."

"Taffy is sweet, particularly to an ugly girl, such as I am, even when I know that it is taffy."

"If you were dressed in a becoming manner, with your hair properly arranged, you would look well enough," he remarked, with the air of a critic.

"You think I would pass in a crowd?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"A big crowd—a very big crowd, say about a million, so that I wouldn't have any chance to be seen," and again this odd creature gave herself up to merriment.

"Oh, not so bad as that!"

"Well, I am as I am," she remarked, abruptly sobering down, "and I can't help myself. I try to behave myself as near as I know how and that is about the best I can do."

"What is your name?"

"Nan."

"Nan?"

"Yes, sir-ee, Nan; short and sweet, ain't it?"

"Yes, it's not an unpleasant-sounding name, and although it used to be common, it's getting to be rather odd nowadays."

"Short for Nancy, of course. I got the name from granny here. She is Mrs. Nancy O'Neil."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GIRL'S STORY.

"But the old lady isn't your grandmother?" Roland Yorke asked, unable to believe that there could be any tie of relationship between this bright, intelligent girl and the dull, stupid old woman, who could only boast of a sort of low cunning, peculiar to the race from which she came.

"Not much!" replied the girl. "She is no kith or kin of mine, as far as I can find out, but as I told you on the stairs coming up, she's the woman who has looked after me since I was a baby, and somebody pays her eight dollars a month for taking care of me. That is, she used to take the eight dollars, but ever since the time when I started on my own hook she has turned the money over to me."

"She's a square old soul, you see, square as a die!"

"I am decidedly interested in your history, for there is evidently a mystery connected with

your birth," the detective observed, thoughtfully.

"Oh, yes, you can bet high on that. There is a big mystery, and I've puzzled my head a good deal over it since I've got old enough to take care of myself, but I've only had my labor for my pains."

"I suppose the old woman is bound to secrecy?"

"Oh, no, she don't know any more about it than I do."

"She's a good old soul, though she's a leetle too fond of taking more benzine than is good for her once in awhile."

"She's so fond of me that she would give the whole thing away if she could, but she can't."

"This seems like a riddle," the detective remarked, "and I confess I do not understand it."

"Oh, I'll spin the yarn right from the beginning, and then you'll be able to get at the rights of the matter," responded the girl.

"I'll give it to you just as straight as a string, just the way granny give it to me, after I got big enough to be inquisitive, and used to pester the life out of her with questions."

"How old do you think I am?"

"Well, you look to be about fifteen, but from your manner I should judge you were older."

"I will be eighteen next fall, but no one takes me to be as old as that."

"I should not from your appearance."

"I wear short dresses on purpose so as to look as childish as possible, for I don't think it looks nice for a great big girl to be selling papers in the street."

"That is what I do for a living, you know."

"Well, to come down to my story: one summer-night about seventeen years ago, Mrs. O'Neil was sitting at the end of one of the piers for the sake of getting a breeze from the river, for the day had been a scorcher, and the night was about as bad."

"There was a lot of people on the pier when she went down, but as the night wore on they gradually went home."

"There was some barrels and boxes on the dock, and granny found a snug nook, curled herself up in it and went to sleep, expecting to be roused up by the party with whom she came to the pier when they got ready to go home."

"But these folks forgot all about granny, and went away without waking her."

"The first thing she knew was being roused from her sleep by the sound of a woman sobbing, and when she looked around on the string-piece, right at the end of the pier sat a well-dressed young woman holding a baby in her arms and talking to it in such a way that granny came to the conclusion that the woman had gone crazy."

"I cannot do it—I cannot do it!" the woman exclaimed, and then she would try and hug the baby.

"There wasn't a soul on the pier but granny and the strange woman, all the rest having gone home, and from the light that the moon had risen granny judged that it must be near midnight."

"Now granny was always a good-natured soul, so she up and said:

"Can I do anything for ye, ma'am?"

"The strange lady grabbed her baby to her breast, jumped to her feet, and granny for a moment thought she was going to spring overboard, so she made haste to grab her."

"Don't do it, ma'am, don't leap into the river, for I'll give the alarm and you'll only be fished out again!"

"What is the use of living?" said the strange lady. "I am an unfortunate wretch and would be far better off beneath the dark waters than anywhere else."

"Oh, don't say that, ma'am!" cried granny. "A bright, handsome lady like yourself, sure, there's a great store of good luck for you somewhere in this world if you only take the trouble to hunt it up."

"I haven't a friend in the world!" the lady exclaimed, looking as if her heart would break.

"There's plenty of friends for you if you'll only give them a chance to show themselves," granny replied.

"Granny always had the gift of the gab, as she calls it, and that is because when she was a girl in Ireland she kiss'd the blarney stone."

"The lady seemed to be struck by the force of this remark and looked earnestly at granny as much as to ask if she was really in earnest."

"Oh, I mean it, every word of it!" granny exclaimed. "Sure, a lady like yourself could easily do well if you only tried."

"Perhaps, perhaps," the other replied. "If I only had myself to look after, but hampered as I am with this child, this living evidence of my folly and another's sin, this innocent babe that I both love and hate—"

"Give it to me, ma'am!" cried granny, in that blundering, good-natured way of hers. "I'll take care of it for you until you get a chance to turn 'round. My husband is a fisherman, and away most of the time, and as we never had any children of our own he won't mind."

"When you get able you can pay a trifle if you like or take the baby just as you please."

"The lady accepted the offer, gave the child

to granny, and arranged to meet her there on the pier on the first of the next month.

"She kept the appointment, said she had found friends, but wanted granny to keep the child, and agreed to pay her eight dollars a month."

"And you were that child," Roland Yorke said, guessing at the fact.

"Yes, sir, I was that blessed baby."

"Years passed on and I grew up. My mother—that is, if the woman who gave me to granny was my mother—never cared to see me. She came regularly and paid the money, but never set eyes on me."

"When I was eight years old the personal payment stopped."

"The lady told granny that she was going to leave the country, and did not expect to ever return to it again."

"The money would be paid through an agent, and if the payments were ever stopped granny might make up her mind that the lady was dead and everything was ended."

"And the money has been regularly paid?" the detective inquired, deeply interested.

"Yes, regularly every quarter, until this last quarter, then, when granny went for the money to the old pawnbroker, Moses Cohenson—perhaps you know where his place is on the Bowery?"

The detective nodded.

Cohenson was one of those pawnbrokers who was regarded by the detectives as being but little better than a thieves' "fence," as the place where stolen goods are disposed of is called in the thieves' argot.

"He's the agent. He said the money had not come, but he supposed it would be along in a day or two."

"Do you think he knows the party?"

"He swears he doesn't; says that all he knows is that he gets a dollar for paying over the check. It is always sent in the form of a check, and granny has to go to the bank to have it cashed."

"That trail ought to be easily followed, and if you like I'll undertake the job of finding out who and what this mysterious lady is."

A wistful look came into the girl's dark eyes.

"If she is my mother, I feel sometimes as if I would like to see her, and then again I get bitter and revengeful when I think how she cast me off when an infant."

"I ain't much of a daughter, I know, for any kind of a decent mother to be proud of, but then just think, sir, how much worse I might be if granny hadn't taken such good care of me."

"You're a good girl, Nan, and I believe that there's the making of a noble woman in you!" the detective cried, warmly.

"Taffy again, and sweeter than before," she said, with a laugh, but there were tears in her dark eyes.

The old woman returned at this moment with the intelligence that the coast was clear.

Roland Yorke took his departure, first making an appointment with the girl, for he assured her he would lose no time in following up the clew he had secured.

Through Cherry street the detective safely passed without hindrance, but just as he turned the corner of Catharine street he came face to face with Bristol Bill and his two pals, Sheeny Lew and Red Barry.

There was a shout of recognition.

CHAPTER XIV.

THREE TO ONE.

"AHA!" cried Bristol Bill, in triumph, "this time you shall not escape me!"

And, without pausing to draw a weapon, he threw himself upon the young detective.

It was the desperado's plan to close in with his foe so as to prevent him from escaping by flight and while he kept him employed, his associates could attack the detective from the rear.

It was an old game, and one which had been worked successfully a hundred times before.

Many a man had been assailed after this fashion and left bleeding and almost lifeless upon the ground by just such ruffians as Bristol Bill and his pals.

But though our hero appeared to be but slightly built, yet he was one of those deceptive men, being perfectly proportioned, who appeared much smaller than he really was.

Roland Yorke could hit out straight from the shoulder as well as any professional boxer, as he quickly proved to the men who assailed him.

Bristol Bill, rushing upon his prey with the ferocity of a tiger, was met by a right-hander, skillfully delivered just between the eyes, and with so much power in it that the desperado went reeling backward like a drunken man.

Red Barry, who was prompt to follow the example set by his chief in attacking the young man, caught a smashing blow from the detective's fist which landed on his nose, and, for the moment, gave him the impression that a brick house had fallen on him.

Sheeny Lew, more cautious than his fellows, more expert also, for he was a pugilist by profession when not engaged in the pleasant occupation of making free with other people's property, made a feint of closing with the detective,

and when Yorke sent one of his powerful right-handers straight at his head, succeeded in dodging the blow, then broke through the guard of Yorke and closed in with him.

His success, though, was short-lived, for no sooner had he grasped the detective than the other, with an adroitness that fairly astounded the pugilist, got an under grip on him, and with an exertion of strength that not one judge out of a thousand would have deemed possible to exist in such a slenderly-built man, "threw" Sheeny Lew, bringing him to the ground with a force that made every bone in his body feel sore.

The fallen man had accomplished his purpose, though, for, during the few seconds that he had contrived to occupy, Bristol Bill and Red Barry were afforded an opportunity to recover from the effects of the blows they had received.

And no sooner had the detective completed Sheeny Lew's downfall than the two were upon him.

They closed in so quickly that Roland Yorke was not afforded any opportunity to use his fists.

The three men struggled with each other like so many angry serpents for a few moments and then came to the ground, all in a heap.

By this time Sheeny Lew was on his feet and drawing a stout club from his pocket—a peculiar weapon made of ratan, loaded in one end with a solid lump of lead, an English instrument, commonly termed a life-preserver—endeavored to get a chance to hit the detective on the head with it.

A single blow from the life-preserver, dealt by Sheeny Lew's vigorous hand, would undoubtedly have laid the detective out as flat as a mackerel.

But the contestants were twisting and turning so rapidly that the ruffian hesitated to strike for fear of injuring one of his pals instead of the detective.

Then, too, a crowd had immediately gathered, and although there were quite a number of roughs in the throng, who were well acquainted with Bristol Bill and his party, and could be depended upon to lend a hand, if requested so to do, yet there were also strangers present, sailors, mostly, more or less under the influence of liquor, and all clamorous for "fair play."

"Three ag'in' one ain't the cheese, nohow, you kin fix it," one of the sailors declared, and as he was a broad-shouldered fellow, about six feet high and evidently gifted with great personal strength, besides being one of that class of mariners commonly termed "hard as a pine knot," his utterance had decided weight.

The moment he reached the scene of conflict, heading a party which consisted of half a dozen jolly Jack Tars, who had evidently been having a deuce of a time, and ascertained what the matter was, he interfered in the row.

"You put up that joker of yours!" he cried sternly, to Sheeny Lew, and he shook a brawny fist at the ruffian in a manner that plainly indicated he intended to have the command obeyed.

"Don't you dare to attempt to use that air we'pon or I'll knock you clean through the side of a brick house!"

And as Sheeny Lew, with the experience born of long practice, looked at the man, the idea came into his head that the sailor would be pretty apt to try the experiment, and if he did not succeed would come mighty near to it.

"Fair play is a jewel the world over, and me and my mates are going to have it, if we have to clean out the hull gang of ye!" the sailor continued.

The Cherry street roughs are desperate men, but they knew full well the danger there was in provoking a party of Jack Tars on a bit of a spree.

The sailors always fought like demons when their blood was up, and then too every man of them carried a sheath-knife, and when hard pressed they were not apt to hesitate to use the weapon as many a man along shore could testify to his cost.

"Form a ring—stand back, all of you!" yelled the big sailor in a stentorian voice. "Let 'em fight it out! I'll put my money on the little cuss, even if he has got two big fellers ag'in' him!"

The keen-eyed sailor had calculated rightly; despite the odds Roland Yorke was getting the best of the struggle.

In such a contest as this the two acting together could not employ their forces to good advantage, and the detective had managed to obtain a decided lead.

With his slender left hand, which was, however, as strong as though made out of steel, he had caught Red Barry by the throat and choked him until the eyes of that worthy protruded and he turned black in the face.

With the other he successfully resisted Bristol Bill's attempts to do him material harm, and when Red Barry weakened, rendered incapable for the time being of doing any damage, the detective turned his entire attention to Bristol Bill.

Just at this moment the cry of police was heard, and two stalwart officers, club in hand, forced their way through the throng.

"Help, help!" Roland Yorke cried, the mo-

ment he heard the shout raised that the police were at hand.

"I am a detective officer and have laid hold of Bristol Bill!"

The announcement threw a damper over the enthusiasm of the sailors, for these men seldom have reason to look upon a policeman in the light of a friend.

Sheeny Lew was quick to perceive and take advantage of the turn of the tide.

"The cops are coming, boys! will you let Bill be taken?" he cried.

There was a wild yell and a sudden rush of the crowd.

The detective's prisoner was torn from his grasp, and at the same moment he received a dozen different blows from as many different men, and one of the licks, a vicious one on the head, that he felt sure was inflicted by the "life-preserver" of Sheeny Lew, was so severe that for a moment he "saw stars."

But by the time the police got to the spot he was himself again, but the ruffians had fled, with the exception of Red Barry, too weak to escape.

"What's the row?" cried one of the policemen, as Roland Yorke rose slowly to his feet.

"A little tussle with Bristol Bill and his gang, that's all," Yorke replied. "I am a detective officer attached to the central office, and was sent out expressly to capture Bristol Bill."

"I found him all right, but his pals were with him, and they attempted to lay me out."

"They would have succeeded, too, I think, if some sailors hadn't interfered so as to give me a show for my money."

"Bristol Bill managed to get away, but I've got this fellow dead to rights."

The police assisted the fallen man to rise, and great was their astonishment when they discovered that the man whom the detective had managed to overcome in this triangular fight was the notorious Red Barry.

In wonder they looked upon the dandified young man.

What kind of a fellow was he to be able to overcome such a man as the desperado, and at the same time "stand off" Bristol Bill?

This capture made a deal of talk in police circles, and the authorities soon made up their minds that they had got hold of a valuable man when they admitted Roland Yorke into the detective force.

"You look like a dandy, but you seem able to hold your own against the best of them," the old superintendent remarked.

"Yes; Bristol Bill dubbed me the Genteel Spotter, and I hope before I get through to make the name worthy of remembrance," the young man replied.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE TRAIL.

ALTHOUGH the police authorities were glad to get hold of Red Barry, yet they regretted the escape of Bristol Bill, for Bill, in the thieves' world, ranked as being equal to about a dozen of the others.

Bristol Bill had the head to plan, while Red Barry was but a stupid fellow, able only to carry out the orders given him.

One was the master, the other only a servant.

Red Barry was wanted on a couple of serious charges, and, acting on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, the authorities offered to make it easy for him if he would give information that would lead to the trapping of Bristol Bill.

Bill was in the city, carefully concealed somewhere, the police felt sure, but all the private and public detectives at the command of the authorities were utterly at fault in regard to him.

He kept so discreetly in the background that the closest search failed to find him.

Red Barry was true to his chief, and laughed at the offers made to him.

"Maybe you may be able to send me up the river, but you'll never be able to keep me there," he declared defiantly.

"And as for Bristol Bill, if you want him so bad, you had better put on your spectacles and look for him."

"I'm not giving away pals at this stage of the game."

Finding that the ruffian could neither be bribed or frightened into betraying his chief, the superintendent of police gave the case entirely into the hands of Roland Yorke.

"Go ahead! do the best you can, and I will back you up with all the power at my command!" he said.

The detective gladly accepted the mission.

Meanwhile he had not been idle in the case of the young girl who had come so timely to his rescue in the old cellar.

He had met her according to appointment, and obtained from her all the particulars in regard to the mysterious payment of the money which the old woman received quarterly.

Armed with this information, he had called upon the Jew pawnbroker.

Moses Cobden was the name under which the man did business, but the detective had

learned by inquiry among the force attached to the central office that it was more than suspected he had no claim to either name.

His reputation was decidedly bad.

Stolen goods had been traced to his place time after time, and though he had been repeatedly cautioned that some day he would get himself into serious trouble if he did not look more closely after his business, it did not do the least good.

In fact, all the detectives were perfectly sure that the pawnbroking was a mere blind to cover his real business, which was that of a "fence," or receiver of stolen goods.

In person the pawnbroker was a little, withered-looking, fox-like man, about fifty years old.

A smooth-spoken, oily sort of a chap, with a squeaky voice and a sneaky manner.

A man who never by any chance looked anybody in the eye, and who always cringed and crouched as though he was afraid some one was going to strike him.

Another peculiar habit he had, too.

Whenever he talked with anybody, he was always rubbing his hands together, as if he was washing them in invisible soap and water.

Slippery Moses was the name by which he was generally known, and from long experience, all who were intimately acquainted with him regarded the name as being particularly appropriate.

Moses's establishment was situated on the Bowery, as the second principal artery of great Gotham is called, the great shopping street of the middle class of the city.

A truly cosmopolitan street, where almost everything under the sun can be bought, and on whose ever crowded sidewalks the natives of twenty different countries can be encountered, and the effect of so many languages falling upon the ears, as the crowd bustles onward, recalls to one's memory the story of the Tower of London.

The shop of the Jew was a very insignificant-looking one.

There was a small show-window, wherein a miscellaneous collection of articles was displayed, ranging from so-called diamond rings down to a child's rattle.

Conspicuously over the door hung the pawnbroker's sign, the same all over the world, no matter the country, nor the language, the three golden balls, the old-time arms of the Florentine house of the Medicis, who long years ago in the land of sunny Italy lent money to their brother nobles, took usury and security, and so founded the numerous if not noble line of pawnbrokers.

But in the cant slang of the day the three balls signify that it is "two to one you don't take out what you put in."

"Slippery Moses" was in the shop when the detective entered.

It was a remarkable fact, and one often commented upon both by Moses's customers and the police, that no one ever visited the shop and found the old man absent.

He seemed to be as much of a fixture as the counter in the place.

The old Jew had eyes like a hawk, yet he always wore a pair of old-fashioned, iron-bowed spectacles, with light blue glasses.

Shrewd men said it was to conceal the expression of his eyes.

When it came to difficult work the Jew could control every muscle in his face with the skill of a practiced actor, but he feared the eyes would betray him so he kept them guarded.

The pawnbroker was sitting upon a high stool behind the counter, with an extremely dirty memorandum-book in his hand and the stub of a pencil, busy in calculation.

When the young man entered he favored him with a rapid glance, and the detective felt that the pawnbroker was taking a mental inventory of him and all his belongings.

"Are you Mr. Cobden?" Yorke asked.

The Jew put away the book and pencil, got down from the stool and shambled up to the end of the counter.

"Yesh, yesh, dat is mine name, mine fr'end," he said, again surveying his visitor with a glance so piercing that it seemed to go right through him like a gimlet.

"I've a little bit of business with you."

"Yesh, mine fr'end, yesh; vat ish it?" and the old man commenced to wash his hands with the invisible soap and water.

"It is a little private matter," the detective explained.

An almost imperceptible look of mistrust passed rapidly over the face of the pawnbroker. Roland Yorke did not look at all like a customer, either regular or irregular, and the Jew did not know exactly what to make of it.

He had not come into the store to pawn anything, that was evident, nor did he look like a thief who had made a successful haul and had come to the shop to dispose of his booty.

"Yesh, yesh, vat ish it, my tear!" smoothly spoke the Jew.

"Do you know an old lady called Mrs. Nancy O'Neil?"

The Jew appeared to reflect profoundly for a moment, and then said:

"Yesh, yesh, I t'ink de name ish familiar to me."

"Well, I should say it ought to be, considering that you have been doing business with her for a dozen years or more."

"Yesh, yesh, is dat so?" and the pawnbroker looked inquisitively at the other, as if to ask what on earth the matter was to him.

"You know it is so; what is the use of beatings around the bush?"

"Mine goot fr'end, I never beats around der bush!" protested Slippery Moses.

"I've come to see you about that little matter."

"Yesh, yesh."

"I represent a certain party who has a great interest in the affair, and I want to find out where the money comes from."

"Monish? Vat monish?" exclaimed the old man with an expression of the utmost astonishment upon his face, just as if he knew nothing at all about the matter.

"Oh, come, no nonsense!" cried the detective, decidedly. "You know what I mean, well enough. I refer to the money that you, for the last sixteen or seventeen years, have paid quarterly to Mrs. Nancy O'Neil, always giving her your check for the amount."

"I want to trace that money on behalf of the child for whom the money is sent."

"Ab, my tear fr'end, you are a lawyer, then?" said the pawnbroker, insistently.

"No, sir, I am not."

"Vat then—why take you an interest in der affair, bey?"

"I am a detective from the central office."

The old man surveyed his visitor for a moment, noted the foppish manner of his dress—the general "dude" air which he wore, then smiled and shook his head.

"Oh, no, mine tear fr'end, you have made some mis'ake; I know all der detectives—I have in New York live long while. No, you are not from der central office," and the Jew shook his head and washed his hands in the invisible water more briskly than ever.

"Moses, I am giving it to you as straight as a ramrod," Yorke replied.

"I am a new-comer on the force, but I've no doubt I shall be able to make your acquaintance in a business way, before long."

"My name is Roland Yorke."

"Mine gootness, der Gentleman Spotter!" cried Slippery Moses, in considerable astonishment, which was not unmixed with alarm.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FRENCH COUNT.

THE detective laughed.

He had produced an impression as he had calculated upon doing.

"You have struck it right the first time," the detective said.

"That is what I am called, I believe, and I am indebted to an old friend of yours for the title."

"A friend of mine?" and the Jew's little, cunning eyes glared suspiciously.

"Yes, Bristol Bill."

"Bristol Bill," the pawnbroker remarked, in a vacant sort of way, just as if he had never heard the name before.

"Yes, you know him well enough; it's no use for you to affect ignorance. That sort of thing is played out."

"Bristol Bill is an old customer of yours."

"So belup me gootness!" protested the Jew, "der name is strange to me. Mebbe I know der mans, mebbe he ish a customer of mine, but I have so many fr'ends whose names I do not know, and den my memory is bad."

"Particularly when you don't want to remember, eh?" and the detective smiled, for he knew the pawnbroker was speaking falsely.

"But never mind Bristol; I didn't come here to talk to you about Bill. I am not trying to worm anything out of you about him. I've got a rod in pickle for that gentleman, and I think it will not be long before I get a chance to clap the darbies on his wrists."

"Der darbies!" said the Jew, in a tone of question, just as if he had never heard the word before.

"The darbies, that is exactly what I said, and of course you don't know the meaning of it, you are such an innocent chap. You never heard it before, did you?"

"I t'ink not," and the pawnbroker endeavored to appear as much like a greenhorn as possible.

"Well, my honest friend, since you appear to be so ignorant of the thieves' language, the renowned and ancient argot, learn from me that darbies means bracelets of steel, handcuffs, in fact."

"Ah, yesh, I vill remember dat."

"Yes, don't you forget it! But now to business. I represent the young girl on whose behalf Mrs. O'Neil receives the money that she gets from you quarterly, and I want to find out who that money comes from."

"If you can help me to procure this information I shall be very much obliged to you, and I give you my word I will try to return the favor some time."

"But if, on the contrary, you are disposed to be ugly and do not feel like giving me a pointer,

then I shall do my best to get square with you one of these days.

"You see, Moses, I talk right open and above-board. There's nothing like coming to an understanding in these little matters."

"Treat me right and you will find me a friend who will stick by you if you ever get into a tight place, but if you choose to act mean there isn't a man on the force who will hunt you down as persistently as Roland Yorke!"

"Mine gootness! I am der nicest mans in der city!" the pawnbroker protested. "I vill tell you vat you vant. V'y shouldn't I? It is no b'isness of mine."

"That is the way to talk, Moses, so go ahead, and, as I said before, it will be decidedly to your advantage to help me all you can in this matter," replied the detective.

"Oh, yes, mine gootness! that ish der kind of mans I am!" and the old Jew washed his hands vigorously in the air.

"I vill tell you all I know, but so helup me gracious! it ish not much."

"Sbust about seventeen years ago, a lady came to me von night as I wash closing der shop up."

"She was shust a common kind of womans, not poor, nor not rich, to sburge from der clothes she wore."

"She wore a dark vail, so thick dat not von leetle bit of her face could I see, but t'inks I to mineselup from der vay you speak, you are a young womans."

"She says to me, 'Moses Cohenson, dey say dat you are an honest man!' I say, right quick, 'Mine gootness, you can bet all you have in der world on dat.'

"Then she explain herselup. She wants to pay Mrs. Nancy O'Neil so much by d'r year, payable quarterly in advance, but she has a reason vy she does not want to see der party."

"She ask me, 'Say I put der money in an envelope and put it into your letter-box—' you see der slit in der door dere?" and the pawnbroker pointed to the store-door where there was a slit for the reception of letters.

"Behind der door there is a box for the letters," the Jew explained.

"Three or four days before the money is due I will put the money into your letter-box, and when the old woman comes you gife her a check for the money. Vill you do it and how much you charge, eh?"

"I see der game in a minute; der check vas a check on me and on der old womans too."

"I have always been ready to turn der honest penny ever since I was born. I told der lady, 'Oh, yes! I vill do it for so much moni-h.'

"Very sheep, my fr'end, because I am an honest mans and always ready to oblige der womans."

"I have never see der lady from dat day to dis. Der money has always comes as regular as clockwork until dis quarter. Der time vas two weeks ago, but dis time it ish nixy weeden," said the pawnbroker in conclusion, dropping readily into the argot.

"Honest, now, is this the truth that you have told me?" questioned the detective, looking the pawnbroker square in the eye.

The Jew lifted both hands in solemn asseveration.

"So helup me Father Abraham it ish!" he cried. "I wish I may die dis minute if it isn't! Oh, sir, I am a square mans when I am treated like a gentlemans."

"Vhy should I lie to you? it ish not to my interest. So helup me gracious, I vill not lie except in the vay of business!"

"I vant to be fr'ends with you, mine goot sir; I have heard der boys talk about you already. Into mine shop comes all sorts of people, you know, but I can't help dat; it ish b'isness."

"Some day I may into trouble get. If a man spouts a watch here mit me, how can I tell dat der 'ticker' was 'faked' from a 'sucker?' How am I to know it vas stolen?"

"In some case like dat you vill speak a goot word for me, mebbe?" and the pawnbroker looked anxiously at the detective.

"Oh, yes; I will do what I can for you."

"I have told you all I know, so helup me gracious! I would not know der womans if I met her der street on, for I have only seen her dat time, seventeen years ago," the pawnbroker declared.

"Did the money ever fail to come in time before?" Roland Yorke asked, thoughtfully.

"Never!" cried the Jew, emphatically. "Most always it ish in der box a week ahead of time."

"Looks as if it had stopped for good, doesn't it?"

The pawnbroker shrugged his shoulders.

"Mebbe; perhaps der womans ish dead."

"That would account for it. I'm much obliged to you for the information, and if it is ever in my power to do you a favor you can command me."

Then amid the profuse thanks of the pawnbroker Roland Yorke departed.

"The trail runs up a tree," he murmured, as he proceeded up the Bowery. "If the money has stopped, I don't see any way to get at the mystery. If the remittance arrives, then when

the time draws near for the next payment I can put a watch day and night on Moses's premises and follow the messenger who deposits the money in the box."

"Nothing can be done now, though, until the money comes, and so until that event takes place I will devote my attention to trapping Bristol Bill."

From certain information that had reached police head-quarters it was surmised that the whereabouts of Bristol Bill might be known to some high-toned gamblers who held forth at an elaborately fitted up "club room" on Thirty-first street, a few doors from Broadway.

So, about eleven o'clock, the detective, in one of the most complete disguises that mortal man ever assumed, made his appearance at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and from this central point lounged up and down Broadway, stopping in at all the popular night resorts.

Roland Yorke on this occasion was disguised as a Frenchman, and he looked the modern Gaul to the life.

He had put on a black wig, the hair of which curled in little crispy ringlets close to his head; a jet-black mustache and imperial, both with carefully-waxed and pointed ends, completely altering the whole expression of his features.

He had even taken the trouble to apply a dye to his face and hands, so that his skin had a decided olive tinge.

In his scarf he wore a handsome diamond pin; a solitaire diamond ring adorned the little finger of his left hand; an elaborate watch-chain shone upon his vest-front; his dress, from hat to boots, was irreproachable, and as he promenaded up Broadway swinging a light cane he looked for all the world like a distinguished foreigner, blessed with plenty of money, and out for a night's enjoyment.

The detective's game was a simple one.

He expected to attract the attention of some of the well-dressed, agreeable "gentlemen" who acted as runners for the high-toned up-town gambling-houses.

"Cappers-in" is the professional name for them, and their business is to frequent first-class hotels and drinking-houses, make the acquaintance of well-dressed strangers, men who were new to the city and who looked as if they had money to lose, and induce them to visit the temples devoted to the worship of the goddess, Fortune.

The bait was a tempting one, and inside of half an hour from the time he made his appearance upon the street the detective got a bite.

And the gentleman who singled him out as being worthy of attention was the very man whom Yorke desired to meet.

Hungry Joe he was popularly called, the chief runner for the gambling-house in Thirty-first street.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONFIDENCE MAN.

HUNGRY JOE was about as well known to the police as any rascal in New York, but so carefully did he conduct his operations that it was but rarely the authorities got a chance at him.

The fellow had one great gift—a gift which rendered him almost invaluable to any first-class gaming-house, and that was a natural talent for gaining the confidence of utter strangers.

Hungry Joe, although not particularly blessed with good looks, yet had a pleasant and agreeable way with him.

He looked like a gentleman, acted like one—in fact, the rascal had been well brought up, being the scion of an old and respectable family, but had gone to the bad early in life, the result of following his own unchecked impulses—and, as a conversationalist, it is doubtful if his superior could be found without a long search among educated and gifted men.

Being a well-read man, and taking particular care to keep up with the times, he was thoroughly posted upon almost every subject, and so was enabled to get upon familiar terms with strangers, if they were at all inclined to be sociable.

In the game which the detective had resolved to play he had one great advantage.

Being a new man on the force he was not personally known to the criminal classes, while he had taken particular pains to familiarize himself with all the representative men of the different grades.

So it happened that the moment he saw Hungry Joe he recognized him, while even if he had not been disguised the confidence man—as the experts in that line of business which Hungry Joe followed are termed—would not have had the slightest suspicion that Yorke was one of the detectives from the Central Office.

Our hero had just entered the elaborately fitted up *cafe* of the Hoffman House, when he noticed he had attracted the attention of Hungry Joe, who had been lounging on the sidewalk near the door of the hotel on the lookout for a victim.

Hungry Joe followed the detective into the saloon, which was well filled with customers, some drinking at the bar, others conve'sing in little knots in the center of the apartment,

while quite a number were examining and admiring the costly paintings which adorned the walls.

The detective joined one of these groups so as to give the confidence man a chance to accost him.

Taking out his eye-glasses and putting them in position he affected to be engaged in a critical examination of one of the paintings.

"Beautiful!" he murmured, as if communing with himself, yet loud enough to reach the ears of Hungry Joe, who had taken up a position right behind him.

"Peste! it is as fine a picture as I have ever seen—ze female forms are lovely beyond expression."

The detective had assumed a slight accent only, just enough to enable any one to suppose he was a foreigner.

"By Jove! it is really superb!" Hungry Joe remarked, affecting the Englishman on this occasion.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he continued, touching the disguised detective on the shoulder, "but could you tell me the name of this really superior work of art?"

"Well, really, I am not exactly sure of the exact title, but I think it is known as Faust's Temptation, or something of that sort."

"Faust, you will observe, is the bearded man in the center, gazing with such enraptured eyes upon ze beautiful women, so perfect in both face and form, while the sneering fellow at his elbow represents Mephistopheles, the Prince of Darkness, who is showing the mortal what pleasures he can bestow upon him if he will only consent to sign away his soul in consideration of a few years of unlimited pleasure."

"I don't really know if it would be such a deuced bad bargain after all," the confidence man observed.

"Those angelic women are almost enough to tempt a saint, particularly such saints as we have nowadays."

"I was just going to take a little liquid refreshment, but as I hate to drink alone, I was looking around for a friend; not much chance of meeting one, though, for I am almost a stranger in the city—I've only been here a week."

"Something like my own case, but I only arrived to-day," the detective replied.

"By Jove! sir, I am glad to meet you. My name is Altenham—Harry Altenham, of London, England. I've just run across the herring-pond to see what kind of a beastly country they had here, anyway."

"My name is Melanforte—Adolph Melanforte. I am a Frenchman by birth, but have been doing business so long in this country—in Canada, Montreal—that I regard myself as being almost a native," Yorke remarked.

And then the two shook hands in the most cordial manner.

Hungry Joe chuckled in his sleeve at the easy manner in which he had succeeded in making the acquaintance of the man who, he thought, would prove a rich prey, while the detective was equally rejoiced at being able to bumble such an old hand at the business as the confidence man so successfully.

"Well, how do you like the city as far as you have got?" Hungry Joe asked.

"I have hardly been in town long enough to be able to pass an opinion."

"Is this your first visit to New York?"

"Yes, although I have been a resident of Montreal for years."

"Come down to have a little fun, I suppose!" said Hungry Joe, suggestively.

"Yes, that is my idea," and the detective laughed as if he thought his companion had given utterance to a good joke.

"That is about my case, and I generally manage to have a good time when I am in foreign parts; but I was just going to take a drink, as I said; will you join me?"

"Certainly; much pleasure it will give me," replied the supposed Frenchman, bowing with stately dignity.

The two advanced to the bar, indulged in a brace of "cocktails," for which Hungry Joe paid, and then the disguised detective insisted upon his new-made friend imbibing at his expense.

The confidence man consented readily enough, glad of an opportunity to "size up" the pocket-book of the other, and his eyes fairly sparkled with delight when the detective, in settling for the "drinks," displayed a large wallet, crowded with bills of large denominations, which he carried in the inner breast-pocket of his coat.

"Are you bound for any particular place this evening?" Hungry Joe asked, as the two sauntered toward the door of the saloon.

"Oh, no, only out for the purpose of killing time. I am a mere straw upon the surface of the tide, content to float in whatever direction accident may see fit to carry me," the other replied, with true French indifference.

"My own case exactly, although I had a sort of idea I should drop into a club-house up the street here, where I was introduced last night."

"A club-house?"

"Yes, a regular first-class place; as fine a one

as I was ever in, and that is saying a great deal too, for I have been the rounds in 'Lunnon town,' and have seen everything worth seeing."

"What sort of a place is it?" asked the detective, assuming to be interested in the matter.

"A temple devoted to the worship of the goddess of chance, and I was really astonished to see that the very best men in New York were hovering about the shrine."

"Nothing surprising in that; a man who is a man with blood in his veins instead of water must have his fling once in a while," the make-believe Frenchman replied, with sangfroid.

"When I was in Paris I made the grand rounds with some friends who were kind enough to do the honors, and we had a glorious time. Ze sport was superb—magnificent!"

"Sometimes it is deuced expensive, though; I remember one rouse that we had in London cost me a hundred pounds, and the deuced cash was gone almost before I knew it. It took unto itself wings and vanished."

Hungry Joe was playing the character of the light-hearted, jovial Englishman to the life, and if the detective had not been posted as to who and what he really was, he would surely have been tricked.

"I have never been unfortunate; the blind goddess always smiles upon me. *Peste!* I am utterly indifferent about the matter. I do not care whether I win or lose," the other replied, with superb indifference.

"By Jove! you would be just the fellow to break one of these banks!" Hungry Joe exclaimed, pretending to be suddenly impressed with an intense admiration for the nerve displayed by his companion.

"Look you here! I have half a mind to go with you to-night, and see if I cannot astonish these Yankee Doodles!" the supposed Frenchman observed, abruptly.

"That's a deuced good idea! By Jove! I believe that you could make the fellows squeal!"

"I'll do it!" the other exclaimed, decidedly. "I have not had anything to stir my blood for a long time, but I do not know if I have money enough. I have not over four or five thousand with me, and to break a bank, you know, my friend, one must play a big game."

Again the eyes of Hungry Joe sparkled, and it required all his self-possession to prevent him from betraying the satisfaction he felt.

Five thousand dollars was a pretty big haul.

"I did not think!" continued the detective before Hungry Joe could speak. "I have my check-book on the bank of Montreal. My signature is good for twenty thousand."

"Oh, you have money enough, so let's be off!"

Hungry Joe's mouth was watering to get at this wonderfully rich pigeon; not often did he chance to meet one so well worth the plucking.

Fifteen minutes later the two were ascending the steps of a palatial brown-stone-front mansion on Thirty-first street.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE DEN.

"I'm not quite sure that I will be able to get in," Hungry Joe observed, in a dubious sort of way, to his companion as he pulled the bell.

"This is one of the high-toned places, and they do not admit any strangers unless they are properly introduced.

"A friend, who knows the ropes, introduced me, and I rather think the sable guardian of the door will be apt to remember me, but he may not."

The detective understood that this was all gammon, for Hungry Joe, being a regular runner for the house, was as well known to the servants as the proprietors of the establishment.

But this little bit of "funny business," as it is termed among the "profession," was for the purpose of inspiring the proposed victim with perfect confidence in the honesty of his companion.

And so, when the servant appeared—he was a stout, good-looking negro, clad in a complete suit of black, with a white necktie, looking respectable in the extreme—at first he affected not to remember "do gemman" at all.

The door was so arranged with a bolt and chain on the inside that it could only be opened about three inches—just far enough for the servant to get a view of the applicants for admission; then, if the inspection was not satisfactory, he could decline to admit them, and it would be impossible for them to force their way into the house.

In case of a descent of the police, while they were engaged in breaking the door open, ample time would be allowed for the gamblers within to escape.

At last the servant pretended to suddenly remember that he had seen de gemman before, and said he would admit him, but hesitated in regard to his companion.

The "capper," however, upon assuring the man that the gentleman was a "thoroughbred," in every respect, succeeded at last in securing admission.

The door was opened by the colored Cerberus and the visitors were ushered into a hall fitted up in the most luxurious manner.

"De password to-night, gemmens, is champagne and oysters," said the negro, as the two

passed by him, and he carefully closed the door after them.

"What means he by that?" the disguised detective inquired, thinking that it was his game to appear ignorant, although he had a pretty good idea in regard to the matter.

"We have to pass another guarded portal. As I told you, this is one of the toniest places in the city; all the big-bugs come here, men whose names on 'change at the bottom of a check are good for a hundred thousand dollars, and it wouldn't do, you know, for any such customers as that to be 'pulled' by the police.

"They wouldn't have such a thing happen for a million of dollars, and although there is very little danger of the police ever troubling the place, for it is understood that the proprietors stand in with the powers that be, and pay a big sum weekly to a certain prominent man in the police department for protection, yet they take all these precautions so as to make their patrons feel safe."

"Ze idea is a good one. *Peste!* it would be ugly to be dragged to a police-station and locked up all night in a miserable cell like a common vagabond. With my constitution, it would not agree at all," the pretended Frenchman remarked, with a true Gallic shrug of the shoulders.

"Not the slightest danger of such a thing occurring, I assure you!" Hungry Joe protested.

"Why, my dear sir, I wouldn't have such a thing happen to me for the world!"

"If the news of such a frightful accident as that should ever travel across the water, it would cost me a fortune, for I've a bachelor uncle, worth a hundred thousand pounds, and he has promised to make me his heir—I was named after him—if I behaved myself like a good boy; so, in England, you know, I am deuced particular what I am up to, but over here, by Jove! I'm on the loose!"

By this time the two had come to a heavy walnut door at the end of the entry.

Hungry Joe turned the gilded knob attached to it, but, instead of the door opening, a little panel, about six inches square, in the middle of the door moved to one side, permitting the face of another well-fed colored gentleman to be seen.

"Champagne and oysters, my boy!" said Hungry Joe.

The darky grinned, closed the panel, and then distinctly to the ears of the two came the sound of heavy bolts moving in their sockets.

"You see," Hungry Joe explained, "how deuced well-managed the place is. If any hostile force succeeded in getting by the first man, here is a second door to stop them and allow time for the birds to escape."

"Ze scheme is beautiful," the Frenchman remarked.

"Oh, the men that run this place are right at the top of the heap!"

Then the door opened, the servant bowed low as the two passed him by, and they ascended the stairs beyond, which were carpeted with an expensive stuff into which the foot fairly sunk, so that their footfall did not make the least noise.

On the floor above were three rooms, two large and one small.

The small room was right at the head of the stairs and fitted up for the reception of the visitors' hats and cumbersome outward garments, a servant being in charge to check the article.

Relieved of their incumbrances, the two sauntered into the front room.

Roland Yorke had seen some finely furnished apartments in his time, but the rooms into which his companion conducted him went ahead of anything in his experience.

The apartments were connected by a large archway.

The front one was a most elegant parlor, adorned with superb furniture, costly statues and expensive paintings.

By one of the walls stood an elaborate sideboard, upon which a sumptuous lunch was spread, flanked by costly liquors.

A cream-colored waiter, active as a dancing-master, and as polite as though he expected every visitor to present him with a five-dollar bill, waited upon the guests.

"This is the best spread in town," Hungry Joe whispered to his companion. "Delmonico himself couldn't get up a better."

"They say they give the cook here two hundred a month and a *carte blanche* to get what he likes."

"The wines and liquors too are superb; I am told that there isn't a better stock in the city than this house has in its cellars."

In the inner room was the faro-table, and around it was quite a throng deeply engaged in play.

The runner was quite right in his statement that the place was first-class in every respect, to judge from the looks of the visitors.

There wasn't a rough or a scaly-looking individual in the rooms.

Although there were about thirty gentlemen present, and the majority of them were well along in years, solid, substantial-looking men, not the kind at all that most people would sus-

pect of risking their money upon the turn of a card. But the establishment had the reputation of playing a perfectly square game, and so the solid men who, not content with the rise and fall of stocks, "hankered" for a chance to either win or lose money more speedily, took a "flyer" in this place.

The disguised detective had surveyed the guests with an eagle eye, although so skillfully did he manage it that he seemed to be simply glancing about him out of mere idle curiosity.

He was looking for the man whom he had sworn to hunt down—Bristol Bill.

And Bristol Bill was there!

The heart of Roland Yorke gave a great leap when he discovered the cutlaw, although his impassible face betrayed no sign of the exultation which possessed him when he made the discovery.

He was on the track again.

Bristol Bill was capitally disguised, and it is doubtful if any eye but that of his desperate and determined foe could have penetrated his secret.

He had had a clean shave, and wore a black wig with rather long hair; the wig came down low on his forehead, and the hair was brushed back behind his ears, and being dressed from head to foot in black, with a white neck-tie, he had quite a clerical look.

The complete black suit, too, made him appear much smaller than he really was, and the alteration wrought in his face by the wig was truly wonderful.

Bristol Bill was not playing, but stood by the sideboard busy in conversation with a portly, good-looking man with a long, brown beard, and the moment the disguised detective set eyes upon him, he came to the conclusion that he was one of the proprietors of the place; there was a certain something about him which, to the practiced eyes of the sleuth-hound of the law, seemed to indicate he was not a visitor.

Bristol Bill and the long-bearded gentleman had surveyed the detective with searching eyes when he entered the room in tow of the capparin, and Yorke, who discovered them almost as soon as they did him, saw that the critical moment was at hand.

If they, with their keen eyes, did not penetrate his disguise, it was morally certain that no one else would be able so to do, and for the moment he felt anxious.

CHAPTER XIX.

A BIG GAME.

THE detective had complete confidence in his disguise though and he did not believe that any one, no matter how well-acquainted with his person, would be able to detect his deception.

This belief was correct, for Bristol Bill did not recognize him, although he bestowed a most searching glance upon him.

Two things favored the disguised man.

In the first place, Bristol Bill hadn't any idea that the detective would be able to get upon his track so soon, for he had caused a report that he had fled from the city to be widely circulated in all resorts where the criminal classes congregate, and where, as a natural result, the police-spies sought their prey.

This was done to throw the sleuth hound off his track.

Bristol Bill fully realized that at last a man bad struck in upon his trail who threatened to prove more dangerous than any instrument of justice whom he had yet encountered, and he had made up his mind that at any cost the bloodhound must be removed.

He understood that it was to be a struggle for life or death, that he must kill the man who had set in upon the pursuit with such fierceness, or else the detective would certainly land him upon the scaffold, and bold as was this master-scoundrel, yet he shrank from the hangman and the rope.

Secondly, as the detective had been lured into the place by the most skillful runner that the city could boast, or the whole country might be challenged to produce his equal for that matter, Bristol Bill at once fell into the error that he was a pigeon to be plucked and never for a moment even entertained the suspicion that there was anything wrong about him.

The searching look that he bestowed upon the stranger was only for the purpose of ascertaining what sort of prey he was likely to make, for Bristol Bill had a large, though secret interest in the gambling-house.

"He looks like a foreigner," Bristol Bill remarked to his companion.

"Yes; I shouldn't be surprised if he panned out rich," the other replied. "That rascal of a Hungry Joe has a scent as keen as a hound for a man with money in his pocket."

"It is a very rare thing indeed for him to make a mistake and waste his time on a man not worth the picking up."

"That's a fine-looking gentleman with the brown beard," the detective remarked carelessly to his companion, as they both happened to glance in the direction of the sideboard at the same time.

"Yes; I have a slight acquaintance with him. He is one of the noted men about town. His name is Bolly Lewes and he is a regular king among the sports of New York."

Hungry Joe felt that he was being led upon dangerous ground, when the Frenchman referred to the man with the brown beard.

Bolly Lewes was one of those men whose reputation as a sport extended from Maine to California, from the Gulf of Mexico to the frozen regions of the North.

That he had been in Montreal a dozen times, and each time made a stir in the sporting circles of the town, was more than probable.

It was possible that the stranger had met him on one of these occasions and to attempt to lie about the man's character might upset the whole affair.

So Hungry Joe thought that it was best to tell the truth.

"Ab, yes, he looks like a representative man, although I should never have taken him for a sport," the detective remarked, quite carelessly, as though he took no particular interest in the matter.

"He is one, and a deuced fine fellow too, everybody says!"

"Let's have a glass of something and then we can try our luck," the supposed Frenchman suggested.

"All right, I'm agreeable."

The two went up to the sideboard; Hungry Joe took a glass of sherry wine, while the Frenchman, to the delight of the runner, indulged in a good horn of brandy.

This was exactly what Joe liked to see.

If a man commenced on brandy he was apt to stick to it, and when a man begins to gamble and becomes excited he generally drinks hard, particularly if he is a new hand at gaming, and not used to the excitement.

Then the two made their way to the table.

An old gray-bearded gentleman, who looked as if he might be the president of a National Bank, had just lost the last of his stock of chips as the two men approached, and stood gazing for a moment with an anxious face as the "bank" raked in its gains, then smiled a sort of sickly smile, got up, went to the sideboard, helped himself to a whole tumbler full of brandy, took his hat and departed.

Bolly Lewes noticed him as he went out, and remarked to Bristol Bill:

"That's old General Jones, of the firm of Jones and Jones; one of the leading broker-houses in Wall street."

"He has blown into the bank here fifty thousand dollars since last month."

"I should not be surprised if the firm wakes up some morning and finds the general to be among the missing."

"For I reckon it's the firm's money that he has been using."

The gambler's words were prophetic.

Next morning the general was among the missing.

He was dead.

Going straight home from the gambling-house he took a dose of poison, and the next day the city rung with the news that he was a defaulter to the tune of a hundred thousand dollars.

Such is life!

"Hungry Joe's man is going to take the general's chair," Bristol Bill remarked, "and that ought to bring him bad luck, for I heard one of the boys say to-night that the old man hadn't won a bet for a week."

"Well, I don't know about that," responded the gambler, with a dubious shake of the head. "The chair may be bad luck to him, and mighty good luck to another man."

"I've seen luck change about in just that way a hundred times; luck is one of those slippery things that a man can't tell much about."

"I know I would much rather tackle a bank after an unlucky player, than to take the chair of a man who had got up a big winner."

And the gambler seemed right in this belief, too, for the luck of the chair seemed to change the moment the stranger sat down in it.

"That man is no slouch of a gambler!" Bolly Lewes exclaimed, as he watched the Frenchman's game.

And, in fact, the detective, though young in years, was an old hand at this sort of thing, for when standing on the threshold of manhood he had been infatuated with the temptations of the green cloth, and had risked many a dollar, and spent many an hour "bucking from the tiger."

And since he had weaned himself against the fatal habit he had given much study to the game, just for mere amusement, and had thought out a "system" which he judged would be apt to win, if the player was at all favored by fortune.

It was simple enough.

If a certain card came out a loser three times in succession, back it to win on the fourth, or if it won three times, back it to lose on the fourth.

And as the disguised detective had plenty of money to back his game, he went in boldly.

He tossed over ten one-hundred-dollar notes, and requested a thousand dollars' worth of chips to begin with.

This did not excite any particular attention

because it was a "game" noted for its big stakes.

The man who only ventured ten dollars upon a card was thought to be rather small potatoes, fifty-dollar bets being far more frequent than ones for lower sums.

A fresh deal had just commenced when the new-comer sat down at the table; he watched the cards run for a few minutes, until the ace had lost three times in succession, and then he put the whole thousand dollars on the ace to win.

The magnitude of this first bet caused the rest of the players to open their eyes, for it was not often that a man plunged in so boldly at the beginning.

The ace won.

"The luck has changed," Bolly Lewes remarked to Bristol Bill.

"He's a bold fellow and plays a big game, whoever he is," the other remarked. "You had better look out or he may break your bank for you to night," for that's the kind of fellow he is, I can see plainly enough."

"That would be a tough joke on Hungry Joe," Lewes observed, with a quiet chuckle. "He gets so much per cent. of what the stranger loses as his commission for inducing the fly to walk into the spider's parlor."

"Now, if the fellow breaks the bank and strikes us for fifty thousand dollars, can't we come down upon Joe for a percentage on that sum? It's a poor rule that won't work both ways, you know."

"When you get it out of Joe, you can put it in your eye and see clear," Bristol Bill replied.

The game continued.

The stranger bet more and more heavily, and he seldom lost.

The stack of chips at his elbow grew to mammoth proportions.

At two o'clock he had won ten thousand dollars.

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER PLOT.

HUNGRY JOE was dumfounded by the astonishing luck of the stranger.

Events had not transpired at all as he had anticipated.

He had lured the Frenchman into the gambling-house, expecting that he would lose all the money that he had about him, and this was where the capper "came in," as the "bank" paid him a liberal percentage on the amount of money lost by any victim whom he was lucky enough to entice into the place.

And in this case, Hungry Joe felt as sure of fingering his little percentage on the five thousand, or more, dollars, that the stranger had carelessly announced he possessed, as though the money were already in his pocket.

But then the runner had taken the Frenchman to be a greenhorn in gambling matters, and as a general rule it isn't once a hundred times that a man who is not a practical and scientific gambler succeeds in making a big stake at faro, for even if the game be fairly dealt the percentage of advantage is so much in favor of the bank that if luck runs at all even the better must come out a loser in the long run.

But in just about twenty minutes after the Frenchman commenced playing Hungry Joe's eyes were opened, and he realized that he had picked up about as skillful a gambler as he had ever struck in his life, and what Hungry Joe didn't know about gambling and gamblers wasn't worth knowing.

And the man was an amateur, too; no professional player who made a living by following the business, but one who merely played for amusement.

Was indifferent whether he won or lost; played as coolly as though he were only staking cents instead of dollars, and evidently closely calculated all possible chances before he made a bet.

"Just my luck," muttered Hungry Joe, in huge disgust. "Pick up a greenhorn, bring him here to blow in his little five or six thousand 'cases,' and then have to stand by and watch him skin the bank."

"Blamed if I don't believe he'll break the cussid thing before he gets through."

But Hungry Joe was wrong in this surmise.

The successful player was clearly not covetous of lucre, for after reaching the point announced in our last chapter, he looked up at the runner, who was bending over his chair, and remarked:

"I'm getting tired of this sort of thing, and I begin to feel ze hunger gnawing at my vitals."

"I'll cash in my checks and we'll go and have a nice supper somewhere, eh, what do you say?"

"With all my heart!" Hungry Joe replied, suddenly becoming remarkably cheerful.

The thing was going to turn out better than he expected.

The stranger was a far richer prize now than when Hungry Joe had first encountered him.

In addition to his own money, he had the wealth he had won from the bank, and if the runner could succeed in getting him into a trap

where the money could be taken from him, his share would amount to a small fortune.

Not that Hungry Joe had any idea of trying to rob the stranger himself.

Robbery from the person was altogether out of his line. He hadn't the pluck for any bold operation of that kind.

He was emphatically a chicken-hearted scoundrel, otherwise he would have been a rich man long ago.

But the Frenchman was himself preparing to walk into the snare which would certainly cost him his money, if not his life.

The proposition of the successful gambler to go somewhere and have a supper was exactly what Hungry Joe would have suggested if the stranger had not.

The runner knew a nice, quiet place where a splendid supper could be enjoyed at any hour and at the shortest notice, but no men, though, who had ever paid for a supper in this spider's den, cared to task the hospitality of the place a second time, for the meal always cost them everything of value that they had on their persons, and in some cases, where the man was inclined to be troublesome and the prospect for booty was good, the life of the guest was exacted.

The only thing that troubled Hungry Joe was whether he would succeed in finding the inmates of this modern Borgia palace at home or not.

He had heard a report that very afternoon that the master-spirit of the place had been so closely pushed by the detectives as to be obliged to make himself scarce, and he was afraid that this untoward event might interfere with the working of the machinery of the institution.

The Frenchman turned his checks into money, the cashier counting out the bills with the utmost respect, for such a customer as this was not to be seen every day, even in this high-toned place where big play was the rule and not the exception.

The winner stuffed the bank-notes into his pockets with the utmost indifference.

If they had been advertising shop-bills instead of bank-notes worth from ten to a hundred dollars apiece, he could not have been more careless with them.

The other players made way respectfully for him as he left the table and joined his companion.

"Now then, we'll take a parting drink, just to wish ze house luck, and then for as good a supper as money can buy, that is, if you know a place where we can get one at this hour," the successful gambler observed.

"Oh, yes, a nice little quiet place, near here, too, a couple of blocks down Broadway. There's a first-class drinking-saloon on the first floor, and over it are private supper rooms; the cook is as good a one as you can find in the city. Delmonico has no better, and the larder is always supplied with all the delicacies of the season," Hungry Joe replied.

"It is a regular sporting-house, you see, and is only patronized by men who know a good thing when they see it, and are willing to pay the topmost price for it."

"That is ze place for us!" the Frenchman exclaimed, evidently in high spirits.

"Come, we'll take a good glass of brandy and drink good luck to ze house, and then we will be off."

The two advanced to the sideboard, and the obsequious waiter hastened to fill out the brandy.

Nothing succeeds like success, and even the negro was impressed with an immense degree of respect for the man who could pare the tiger's claws as neatly as the stranger had done since he had ventured into the jungle where the wild beast held his court.

Bolly Lewes and Bristol Bill had watched the stranger's play with the utmost attention.

Few words passed between them until the successful gambler arose, and then the proprietor of the gaming-hall drew a long breath, indicative of much relief.

"Thank Heaven the fellow has quit!" he exclaimed, in an undertone, to his companion.

"If he had kept on, and his luck had continued, in another hour he would have broken the bank, and that is an event that has never happened since I opened the doors of this house, although it has come pretty near it half a dozen times."

"He's going to get away with a good deal of money," Bristol Bill remarked, a peculiar look upon his face, as if he was revolving something important in his mind.

"Yes, but I'm not sorry to get rid of him, although he has skinned the bank of a month's profit."

"Well, are you going to let him get away with the cash?" Bristol Bill asked, meaningly.

The gambler was quick to comprehend, and he shook his head.

"Oh, no, Bristol, I'm not on that lay," he replied. "Every man to his trade—running a faro-bank is mine, and that is the only business I propose to follow at present."

"The cuss has got the money and he will get away with it, too, for all of me."

"I reckon I'll have to take a hand in the game, then," Bristol Bill remarked, with evi-

dent determination. "Fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars don't grow on every bush, and as I've an idea that it will not be an extremely difficult job to secure the cash I propose to go in for it."

The gambler shook his head.

"What's the matter with you?" the other asked. "Don't you think the trick can be worked? Don't you see how Hungry Joe is sticking to him? He has evidently made up his mind that there's a chance to get at the boodle."

"Well, I know the thing looks feasible enough, and the money is a big stake," Bolly Lewes answered. "But if you'll take my advice you'll let the man alone. His luck to night is running so strong that I reckon everybody had better steer clear of him. There's something about the man that impresses me with the belief he's a dangerous fellow."

"Bah! that's only your gambler superstition!" sneered Bristol Bill. "Hungry Joe hasn't recognized me yet in this get-up, which proves it must be a mighty good one. I'll just give him the 'office,' and if he wants me to come into the game, you can bet all your wealth I'm going."

Then Bristol Bill took advantage of the fact that the Frenchman had turned his back to him in raising his glass to his lips, to make an almost imperceptible sign to Hungry Joe.

The runner returned it immediately and an expression of satisfaction appeared on his face.

The sign had revealed to him that the clerical-looking stranger was Bristol Bill, and Bristol Bill was the man he wanted, the proprietor of the "Private Supper Rooms."

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE SNAKE.

WHEN the glasses were drained, the Frenchman drew a handful of money from his pocket, selected a ten-dollar bill and presented it to the astonished negro, whose breath was fairly taken away by this generous tip.

"Thank ye, sab; much obliged, sab," the servant managed to stammer in a moment.

Then Hungry Joe seized upon the opportunity to reveal to Bristol Bill the design which he had formed.

"It's only a short walk—a couple of blocks off, and I'll guarantee that they'll get you up as good a supper in half an hour's time as can be procured in New York from the Battery to High Bridge," he said, in a tone sufficiently loud to reach the ears of Bristol Bill.

"You see," the desperado remarked to the gambler, "Hungry Joe is steering the 'sucker' straight for my place. I'll bet you a hundred to ten that I skin him before daybreak."

"If you'll take my advice you'll let him alone," Bolly Lewes replied. "I wouldn't tackle the fellow with this run of luck on him for a million dollars."

"Look out that he don't slip over the traces in some way and put a bail through you."

"I'll risk it," Bristol Bill replied, carelessly, and then he followed Hungry Joe and his companion, who by this time were out of the room.

The disguised detective, who was playing the role of the Frenchman so well, perfectly understood what Hungry Joe was up to when he made the remark which was to warn Bristol Bill that a "sucker"—as the thieves termed all victims—was to be conducted to his den.

The detective knew the sporting-house, too, and although in the minds of the police it was not certain that Bristol Bill was connected with the place, yet they were aware he often used it for a head-quarters.

Hungry Joe—after he and his companion reached the street—was loud in praise of the masterly manner in which the Frenchman had triumphed over the faro game.

"By Jove!" he cried, "I never saw anything like it. You understand faro for all it is worth!"

"Oh, yes, I've made a practice of playing for years, although generally in a small way, but the humor seized me to-night to see what I could do with a big game."

"Well, you have no reason to complain."

"Oh, no; if the bank is satisfied, I am," and then they both laughed heartily at the joke.

Just at this point Hungry Joe discovered that he had a couple of choice cigars in his pocket.

"Deuce! fine imported fellows, you know," he explained. "I have a friend in the custom-house who supplies me."

Then they had to stop while Hungry Joe hunted in his pockets for a match, and it took him a couple of minutes to find his match-case. Then the cigars were lighted and they resumed their walk.

This maneuver was to give Bristol Bill time to get ahead of them and reach the sporting-house before they arrived there.

And the disguised detective understood this dodge also, for his keen eyes detected Bristol Bill hurrying noiselessly along on the other side of the way.

But the leagued scoundrels were not the only ones who were up to secret games that night.

As the two passed along Broadway, just be-

fore they reached the sporting-house, which was apparently closed for the night, for there wasn't a gleam of light visible about the place, a seedy-looking man, with an unsavory face and a general appearance of having slept in the gutter for a night or two, came up to the gentlemen, and with a strong English accent said:

"Will either of you two gents 'ave the kindness to oblige me with a nickel? I want a drink so bad that my throat feels like an has-'cap, 'pon my soul!"

"Here's a ten for you," and the Frenchman threw the man a crumpled bill, which he caught with the utmost eagerness. "Now be off, and get drunk as soon as you like."

"Strike me blind if I don't!" cried the fellow as he swaggered off, evidently overjoyed at the windfall which had come so unexpectedly.

Hungry Joe looked after the man with a troubled expression upon his face.

The features of the man seemed to be familiar to him, and yet he could not place him.

"Can that fellow be a detective in disguise?" he murmured under his breath.

Hungry Joe was ever on the watch and about as easy an alarmed rascal as there was in the city.

"Anyhow, I don't see how he could smoke my game if he was," he mused.

And then he came to the conclusion he had allowed his imagination to get the better of his judgment, and that he had no cause to be alarmed about the man whether he was a detective or the homeless wanderer he appeared.

"The place seems to be closed," the Frenchman remarked.

"Oh, that is all right; that's done to keep away undesirable customers who might be inclined to kick up a row."

"The place is very exclusive after midnight, and they will not give admittance to every Tom, Dick and Harry."

Then Hungry Joe pulled the bell.

In a moment or two a servant appeared.

"My friend and I want to get a little supper," Hungry Joe said, nodding to the servant like an old acquaintance.

"All right, sir; I guess we can accommodate you," and the man made way for them to enter. "What would you like, gentlemen?" he asked, as he closed the door.

"Any particular dishes you would prefer?" Hungry Joe asked of his companion.

"Oh, no; I'll leave that to the cook," the Frenchman replied, in his lordly way. "Tell him that a couple of gentlemen desire a light supper; they want the best in the house without regard to price, and they will leave the selection of the viands to his good judgment."

"Yes, sir; I'll tell him. He'll fix you up all right, gentlemen," the man replied, evidently impressed by the manner of the Frenchman.

"And while the cook is getting the supper ready, send us up a bottle of the best wine in the place," said Hungry Joe.

"Yes, sir; turn to the left at the head of the stairs, gentlemen, and take the front room."

"All right."

Up the stairs the two went, while the servant sought the lower regions.

Hungry Joe led the way into the front apartment.

It was a good-sized room, connected by large doors with the apartment in the rear, which was a room of the same size, but fitted up as a sleeping-apartment.

And the bed in the room was a wonderful affair, being one of the old-fashioned kind with huge posts, and a canopy resting on the posts, and extending all over the bed.

"If a fellow became sleepy, or got too much liquor on board, that bed would come in handy," the Frenchman observed.

"It is at our service, if we need it," Hungry Joe replied.

The gas was burning brightly in the room, but as the windows were covered by heavy curtains and the blinds without closed, no rays of light escaped into the street.

The front room was comfortably furnished, a table being in its center, some easy-chairs scattered about, and a sofa placed against the wall.

The disguised detective made a careful inspection of the furniture without appearing to do so.

He was on the lookout for another arm-chair with secret springs like the one that had entrapped him before.

"Once caught, twice shy," says the old adage, and as the Genteel Spotter had experienced the effects produced by Bristol Bill's infernal ingenuity, he was on the alert not to be snared a second time.

Therefore, when he sat down, he selected a plain chair, so there wasn't any possibility of a trick being worked.

Hungry Joe helped himself to the most comfortable rocking-chair in the room, and as he sat down there was an expression of great satisfaction upon his countenance.

Already, in his mind's eye, he was sharing the spoils which he regarded as being sure to be gathered in.

Bristol Bill was a generous fellow with his

pals, and Hungry Joe knew he could depend upon a liberal share.

The servant brought in the wine, carefully boxed in ice, and a couple of glasses—the wide-bowled, slender-stemmed champagne glasses.

He placed the glasses upon a small table, which stood by the door, while he opened the wine.

The detective understood why the man put the glasses upon the small table instead of bringing them to the one in the center of the apartment by which the two sat, for he had that wonderful faculty, so important to a police spy, of seeing everything without appearing to see anything.

In the slender stem of one of the glasses was an almost colorless liquid.

This was a drug, and that glass was intended for him.

Already he thought he knew the way the trick was to be worked. The drugged wine would make him sleepy, his companion would press him to lie down upon the bed, then, when drowsiness overtook him, he would fall an easy prey.

Now it was his game to appear to be drugged so as to induce Bristol Bill to show himself, but he wanted to dispose of his companion, for he would be in the way of the scheme which he intended to try and by means of which he hoped to entrap Bristol Bill.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TRAPPER ENTRAPPED.

IT was a difficult matter to accomplish, but Roland Yorke was equal to the emergency.

The game of the scoundrels was to "force" the drugged glass of wine upon him, as the jugglers do when they request one of the audience to select a card from the pack which they offer and then so adroitly arrange that the chooser, while thinking he is making a free choice, takes the very card which it was intended he should select.

The waiter brought the tray containing the two glasses, one on each end of the tray, and placed it on the table between the two gentlemen.

Of course it was but natural that each man should take the glass nearest to him, and the disguised detective understood perfectly well that the glass next to him was the one that contained the drug.

He had made up his mind, though, that Hungry Joe should try the effect of the drug, and had thought of a plan to effect it.

Both of them had risen when the servant approached, and the disguised detective had quietly taken out a whole handful of the crumpled bills which he had so carelessly stuffed into his pocket, and as the waiter put the glasses on the table he said:

"Good boy! here's a trifle for you!"

Then opening his hand, "accidentally" he allowed half a dozen of the bills to fall upon the floor.

Both Hungry Joe and the waiter dove down for them immediately, and as they did so, with lightning-like rapidity the detective changed the glasses, putting the drugged one next to Hungry Joe.

The two picked up the scattered notes and returned them to the disguised detective, who presented the waiter with a five-dollar bill, and also asked Hungry Joe if he didn't want a loan.

But Joe said no, with a lordly air, and the waiter retired, loud in thanks.

No wonder that both were satisfied.

The waiter had captured a ten-dollar note on the floor, while Joe had secured a twenty.

And it was with the idea of making a capture of this kind that the two had been so eager to pick up the bills.

They had succeeded, but ruined the plans of their master by the operation.

"Well, here's your health, my friend!" exclaimed the Frenchman, with joyous accent, helping himself to the glass nearest to him, a fact which Hungry Joe noticed with a great deal of satisfaction.

The confidence man took the other glass, the two pledged each other and the champagne disappeared.

The Frenchman caught up the bottle immediately and refilled the glasses.

"Come, another, my friend; this is life!" he cried, and at the same time began to roll his eyes and assume a stupid expression, as if the drug was beginning to produce an effect upon him.

Hungry Joe noticed this with delight, and at the same time wondered why on earth it was that the single glass of champagne had made him feel so internally sleepy.

"By Jove!" he muttered to himself, "can it be possible that the deuced idiot made a mistake and put the drug in both of the glasses?"

"He's fixed all right, but I feel as if I was, too."

"I must keep my senses, though, until I get him on the bed and give the signal that everything is O. K."

"I can't keep my eyes open," stammered the

disguised detective, after he had swallowed the second glass of wine, affecting to be almost overcome.

"I must lie down for a while—wake me when the supper comes."

And then he staggered to the bed, stretched himself upon it with his face upward and pretended to fall immediately into a deep sleep.

Hungry Joe rose, steadied himself by the table and watched until the Frenchman was on the bed; then he staggered to the bed, caught hold of the front upright post at the foot of the bed and pressed a small knob which was concealed in it.

"Blessed if I ain't done for," he muttered, vacantly, and then he sank down in a stupor on the floor.

Roland Yorke had watched him with an eager eye.

"He has given the signal that the victim is in the toils, evidently," he murmured; "and now for the star actor in this thrilling drama! Bristol Bill will soon make his appearance, I suppose, and when he does come I'll give him a reception so warm that he will be astonished."

The detective drew his revolver from the secret pocket where he always kept it concealed and held it in his hand ready for action, still lying on the bed as motionless as a statue, the pistol concealed by his person so that until any one came close to him it would have been an utter impossibility to have detected that he was only shamming.

He kept his eyes on the door, expecting each instant to see it open and Bristol Bill make his appearance.

He understood well enough that the supper was all sham, and the place nothing but a thieves' den.

The minutes flew by.

Hungry Joe, completely stupefied by the dose which he had unwittingly taken, lay on the floor at the foot of the bed, all in a heap.

"What does it mean? Why don't the scoundrel come to complete his villainous work?" the detective queried.

And then, all of a sudden, he made a discovery which for a moment filled him with horror, iron-hearted sleuth-hound though he was.

The top of the bed was descending.

Slowly but surely the heavy canopy, with its padded surface, was coming down, worked by concealed machinery in the posts, to meet the bed.

It was a third of the way down before the detective discovered that it was moving.

He watched it for a few moments to make sure that it was not an optical delusion, and then got off the bed with surprising rapidity.

All the details of the murderous plan were now plain to him, and as this was his second experience with a thing of this kind, the conviction was forced upon him that Bristol Bill must have the heart of a fiend.

The unconscious victim, after being drugged, was placed upon the bed, and the padded canopy smothered the life out of him without leaving any outward marks of violence.

It was truly an infernal machine!

The top descended until it came within six inches of the bed and then it stopped.

A sleeper with his head imbedded in a pillow most surely would have been strangled.

No further movement took place for a good ten minutes, and the detective wondered what was to be the next move in the game, and then it suddenly occurred to him that as Hungry Joe had been left on the watch, it was probably his duty, when he thought the frightful instrument had done its murderous work, to signal by means of the spring in the bed-post to the man who had set the machinery in motion.

"Then Bristol Bill will probably make his appearance, and as I am anxious for a chance to interview that gentleman I'll give the signal," he murmured.

This was no sooner said than done.

And it was as he had expected; almost immediately the bed-top commenced to ascend, moving with the regularity of clock-work, to its usual place.

"If ever there was a scoundrel since this world began who richly deserved to feel the squeeze of the hangman's hempen necktie, surely Bristol Bill is the man!" Roland Yorke exclaimed, as he looked up in the pillows crushed by the power of this infernal machine.

And now a sudden idea occurred to the detective.

Lifting Hungry Joe from his recumbent position he placed him on the bed, turning his face to the wall.

"He's in dark clothes, like myself, and at the first glance Bristol will be sure to take him for me," he observed, "while if he saw that the bed was empty when he came in at the door it would surely excite his suspicions, and it might render the job of securing him a difficult one."

"But if I can take him by surprise I can fix him with a single blow."

This was shrewdly thought, and he shoved his revolver back in his pocket and drew out the ugly club-like weapon which originally local to Philadelphia, is called a black-jack.

He took up a position behind the heavy cur-

tains of the window in the front room; next to the door which gave entrance to the apartment.

Hardly was he thus completely concealed when he heard cat-like steps approaching through the entry.

Grasping the black-jack firmly and nerving every muscle for the struggle the detective braced himself for the attack.

The door opened and Bristol Bill appeared. From behind the curtains, peeping out, the detective could distinctly see him.

Bristol Bill closed the door carefully behind him and then looked at the bed.

"Oho! we've cooked the goose of our gentleman without any trouble!" he cried, in savage glee.

"Now for the plunder!

"Where are you, Joe?"

He advanced half a dozen steps into the room, wondering where his confederate had got to.

The detective glided from behind the curtain and with a single wicked blow on the head felled the ruffian as if he had been shot.

Then burrying to the window Yorke threw it open and gave a loud, shrill whistle.

Ten detectives appeared in the street as suddenly as if they had sprung from the stones, and in a twinkling they battered in the door of the house.

Bristol Bill and his fortress alike were taken.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LOST WOMAN.

NEVER was there a surprise more complete.

The house was occupied by the detectives almost before the inmates were aware that anything was wrong.

Five well-known criminals, besides Bristol Bill and Hungry Joe, were among the prisoners, and each and every one of them was "wanted" by the police authorities.

Bristol Bill's rage when he recovered his senses—for the detective had stunned him with his well-aimed blow—was intense.

He rose to a sitting posture on the floor, looked at the handcuffs upon his wrists—the detective had taken the precaution to snap the bracelets upon the ruffian at the first opportunity—then glanced at the detective, whom he had not yet recognized in his disguise, and broke forth in a torrent of curses.

"Don't swear, old man," remarked the triumphant detective, "for if you do you will not catch any fish."

"And you—you are the man whom I am to thank for this!" Bristol Bill cried, terribly enraged at the coolness of the other.

"Yes, I guess I'm the man."

"I'll have your heart's blood one of these days."

"You said that before, but you haven't succeeded in doing the trick," the detective replied, "although I suppose I would have had a pretty narrow squeeze to-night if I hadn't been on the lookout for you, and walked into the trap on purpose to burst up the whole concern."

Bristol Bill was puzzled; he could not understand how his capture had been brought about.

The servant had said that everything was working beautifully—the "sucker" had taken the drugged glass of wine, and inside of ten minutes his life and valuables would be at the mercy of the thieves, who did not hesitate to add murder to robbery when the booty seemed rich enough to warrant it.

He had received the proper signal for starting the death-dealing machinery of the fearful bed, and after the usual interval the second signal, which signified the murder was accomplished; and how any one but Hungry Joe could have given those signals he could not understand.

By this time the detectives had placed a pair of handcuffs upon the confidence man, and, luging him off the bed, attempted to wake him, thinking him to be asleep.

"Oh, it's no use of your bothering with him," the Genteel Spotter observed. "He's good for six or eight hours yet, I guess."

"Bill, here, can tell."

And then he turned to the prisoner.

"I say, Bristol, how strong a dose was it that you put into the wine glass?"

For the first time the master-ruffian began to have an idea of how it was that his plans had failed so signally.

"You see, Bristol, I tumbled to your little game right from the beginning," the detective remarked. "I let Hungry Joe pick me up on purpose to lead me to you."

"I knew that he was one of your right-hand men, and I felt pretty certain that if I displayed a large amount of money, he would be sure to try to entrap me into some den over which you presided, and so give me a chance to nail you right at your work."

"In the fiend's name who are you?" cried the baffled desperado.

The detective removed his wig, and the startled ruffian cried:

"The City Thoroughbred!"

"Yes, that is the name you bestowed upon me when first we met, and I really believe it is going to stick."

Bristol Bill was not now in disguise. He had

brown it aside, so that all the detectives, to whom he was well known, did not have the slightest difficulty in recognizing him.

Again a perfect torrent of fearful oaths poured from the lips of the captured desperado.

"Don't waste your breath!" exclaimed the victor, contemptuously.

"Remember the old Arab proverb, 'Curses are like young chickens and always come home to roost.'

"Ob, I'll be even with you s me day for this!" Bristol Bill cried, fiercely. "I'll make you repent in tears of blood the moment when you first crossed my path."

"Exactly; I'll be there when that happens," the other replied, coolly.

"But we've had talk enough. Away with your prisoners, boys!"

The officers took up their line of march.

The due processes of law were gone through and then for safe-keeping all the prisoners against whom serious charges were pending were transferred to the Tombs, there to await trial.

But Bristol Bill had more powerful friends than the authorities gave him credit for possessing, for in some mysterious manner they contrived to smuggle tools to him, and one dark night he took French leave of his jailers despite the vigilance with which he was watched, and managed to escape from the prison.

Without the waks, though, he chanced to encounter one of the keepers who had been absent from the prison on business.

The keeper recognized Bristol Bill and endeavored to detain him, but the prisoner had been provided with arms as well as tools, so with a single slash of a keen-edged knife he laid the prison official bleeding upon the ground and then fled through the darkness.

He was not recaptured, although the whole city was scouried by the detectives in search of him.

The affair excited great interest, and a heavy reward was offered for his capture.

"I'll have him in time," said Roland Yorke, confidently, when questioned by the chief of police in regard to the probabilities of the desperado being taken.

And the City Thoroughbred determined to leave no stone unturned to accomplish this object.

But while he was busy with his plans to recapture the criminal he received a call that astonished him.

It was a lady and she said her name was Rosamond Kendrickson.

"I come to you on behalf of Bristol Bill," she said, as soon as the young man had sufficiently recovered from the astonishment which her unexpected appearance produced, to ask her business.

The detective had seen the picture of the lady taken when she was a girl of eighteen and though she had greatly changed, being now a faded, old-looking woman, as though she had seen hard times and suffered much, yet still the resemblance was strong enough for Yorke to believe she was the person whose name she gave.

"On behalf of Bristol Bill?" asked the detective, perplexed.

"Yes, I understand that it is on my account that you have pursued him with such relentless ferocity."

"Yes, it is on your account, for my father on his death-bed made me promise to bunt the villain down on account of the wrong which he had done you years ago."

"Bristol Bill never wronged me," the woman answered, tartly, "but on the contrary he has been the best and truest friend to me that ever a woman had!"

"You astound me!" exclaimed Yorke, who could hardly believe the evidence of his own ears.

"It is the truth; I knew perfectly well what I was doing when I allowed him to engage my affection.

"It is true he deceived me in regard to his position in the world, but I deceived him even more grossly in regard to mine, so, as far as that goes, the honors were easy.

"And when my parents drove me from their home, I went to him and he gladly received me with open arms, and for years, despite the life which he has been obliged to lead, he has been to me all that a man could be to a woman."

"Then we quarreled—my fault, for I deceived him, and we parted."

"The man, for whose sake I forsook Bill, turned out to be the vilest kind of a scoundrel and died, after robbing me of everything that I had in the world."

"In utter despair and not caring to live I sought to die and Bristol Bill saved me, just by accident."

"He forgave me, and I am anxious to help him as he is in trouble."

"If you pursue Bristol Bill on my account I want you to stop. Your promise to your father needn't stand in the way. If he had only known how thoroughly I despised him and all that belonged to him he would never have troubled his head about me or my affairs."

The detective leaned back in his chair and

surveyed the face of the woman for a moment in silence.

Was it possible, he asked himself, that this was the woman whom his father secretly adored even to his dying day?

It did not seem possible, and for this creature, who seemed to glory in her intimacy with the desperado, he had risked his life so freely.

"Madam," he said, "I entered into this pursuit on your account, but now I must keep it up on my own."

"Bristol Bill is a human wolf who ought to be hunted down, and I for one will never give up the chase until I again snap the bracelets on his wrists."

The woman rose in anger.

"That you will never do!" she cried. "He is out of the country—safe from pursuit. I but pleaded with you that he might return, but you are like all your race, savage and merciless."

And then she departed.

"She lies!" exclaimed the young man, "he is in this country, and she is sorely afraid that I will trap him, and I will too, but it will be no easy job. Proteus-like I must transform myself into somebody else."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TYCOON.

AND now we must introduce the reader to a personage who is destined to play an important part in this our "owr true tale."

Sauntering down Broadway, on the shady side, at the fashionable hour in the afternoon when New York's great artery is always well filled with people, was a tall, well-made, gentlemanly appearing fellow.

A man of thirty eight or forty apparently, although he was one of those well-preserved mortals whose age it is so hard to guess.

His face was rather long, swarthy in hue, with high cheek-bones and jet-black eyes, ornamented with a long curling mustache and a bushy imperial which gave him a decidedly foreign look.

He was dressed in the height of fashion, sported a costly diamond cluster ring upon the little finger of his right hand, and in the elaborate scarf which hid his snowy shirt bosom; front shone a regular 'head-light' pin whose value could not be less than a cool thousand in hard cash.

After a careful inspection, the most experienced man of the world—the careful student of human nature, would certainly have set this elegant gentleman down as being of considerable importance, as the world goes.

And so he was, and yet not in the way that the best man judge would have imagined.

He stood at the very head of his fraternity, and embraced among his intimate acquaintances, about all the prominent police officials and detectives in the country.

He was a rascal of the first water.

No mere petty, common scoundrel, but a very prince of scamps.

In the old days when thieves were all banded in one fraternity he would have stood an excellent chance of being the king of the gang.

He was known as Tom Kellish; whether that was his real appellation or not no one knew, but that was the name that he had always borne since he had arrived in the "land of the free and home of the brave," some twenty years before the time of which we write.

He was not a product of the prolific soil of the New World, but a transplant from effete, played-out Europe, as the stump demagogue is fond of terming the land across the sea.

A man who had "left his country for his country's good," and deuced glad the police authorities of England and the continent had been to get rid of him, for hardly a rascal was there who flourished in Kellish's time who had given the officials as much trouble.

He was a master rascal if ever there was one, and since he had taken up his quarters in the New World he had prospered like a green bay tree.

Our soil and climate is congenial to the growth of first-class men, whether they be honest or otherwise.

Kellish stood at the very head of the operators in his line, and during the twenty years that he had preyed upon the public, living by his wits upon the money of other people, no jailer had ever turned the key upon him for a term of imprisonment.

True, he had been arrested on suspicion more times than he had fingers and toes, but the authorities had never been able to make out a case against him, although at a dozen different times the evidence which they had accumulated seemed conclusive as to his guilt, but he always managed to wriggle out of it in some way.

Being a prudent man, and neither a gamster nor addicted to excessive drinking, like the majority of his class, he always had plenty of money, and, say what you will, money is the most effective thing that has yet been discovered to either accelerate or retard the progress of the wheels of justice.

Kellish was one of the men who went in for big hauls.

A hundred or two of dollars wasn't of any account to him.

He turned up his nose at such paltry plunder. Anything under five or ten thousand he despised.

He was technically known as a "bank operator," though sometimes he figured a little in the confidence line, but always on a large scale.

The record of the big jobs which he was supposed to have engineered would have filled a good-sized volume.

He was generally believed to be the man that worked the trick so neatly on the Washington bank.

Walking in, right in the busiest part of the day, he engaged the paying-teller in conversation, and a confederate, who had followed quietly at his heels, slipped off his hat, concealed it under his coat, put a pen behind his ear, proceeded behind the counter, just as if he was one of the bank clerks, and helped himself to a package of ten thousand dollars just by the teller's elbow; then the two managed to escape with the booty without suspicion being excited.

Kellish was identified and hauled up, but as it was impossible to prove that he had anything to do with the actual stealing of the money, the authorities were forced to release him.

Of course, there wasn't the slightest doubt in the minds of the police officials, and the parties interested, that he was the man who put up the job, and so the bank men, after their failure to fasten the robbery upon him, attempted to compromise the matter, hoping to get back a part of the stolen funds at least.

But Kellish laughed at the idea.

"Why, what kind of an idiot do you fellows take me for?" he demanded. "If I was the man that put up the job, do you suppose, after getting away with the money, which can no more be traced than a bucket of water cast into the river, I would be fool enough to surrender any of it?"

"Honestly, I don't know anything about it, because I didn't plan the job or get any of the boodle; but if I did, nary cent would I surrender."

On another occasion he did a trick so bold that it made the whole country ring.

He went into a bank in a country town in Georgia, right in the heart of the cotton season, when Northern money had gone down to move the Southern crops, at the noon hour, selecting a time when the clerks had gone to lunch and only the cashier happened to be in the bank.

Kellish was disguised with an iron-gray wig and beard, and was got up to personate a back-country farmer.

He had arranged a couple of bogus notes, purporting to be drawn and indorsed by some obscure men in the neighborhood, who were, however, well known, although their financial standing was anything but good.

He had come to see if he "couldn't raise some money on the notes," he said, and pretending to be extremely deaf, succeeded in getting the cashier to come out from behind the counter to talk to him.

And the moment he got the man, who was an elderly gentleman, busy examining the notes, he caught him by the throat, so as to prevent him from giving an alarm, shoved a sponge which was dexterously affixed to a little wide-mouthed bottle filled with chloroform to his nostril, holding him with a grip of iron, until the old gentleman sunk to the floor in a stupor.

Then he helped himself to some packages of bills, amounting in value to a little over twelve thousand dollars, stuffing them into the pockets of the old-fashioned long coat which he wore as carelessly as if they were so much paper.

The booty secured, he proceeded to escape, but right on the threshold encountered two of the clerks returning from their lunch.

Assuming an appearance of alarm, he cried:

"Say, boys, the old man has fainted!—got a stroke of 'plexy, I s'pose. Jest do all you kin for him while I run for a doctor! And, say! thar's a couple of notes of mine that he was lookin' at. Look out for 'em, will ye, 'cos they're worth a couple of hundred, and cotton's selling too dog-goned low for me to afford to lose any sich sum as that!"

Then he galloped out of the door, while the clerks, without the least suspicion that anything was wrong, hurried to the assistance of the old gentleman.

The better to "go for the doctor," Kellish jumped upon his horse, which he had handy, and made good time out of the town.

It took about fifteen minutes for the truth to be ascertained, and then immediate pursuit was given, and so hot was it that within a week's time Kellish was run to earth in Atlanta, but none of the money was found upon him, nor any part of the disguise.

The only thing was the horse, and this was very easily identified, for a dozen men had seen the supposed planter ride out of the town.

And as Kellish was being tried in a country where neither judge nor jury could be got at by the means of either money or influence, it really seemed as if the master-rascal was going to do the state some service this time.

But as we have said, Kellish was a born genius and a firm believer in the old saw which says there are more ways than one to kill a cat.

The bank, immediately after the robbery, had offered a reward of a thousand dollars for the apprehension and conviction of the thief.

The only point against Kellish was the horse, and he attempted to explain away the possession of the steed by saying he had bought it from a young man, but as he couldn't produce the man, or any evidence to prove that the story was true, the police officials from the Northern cities were brought down to testify that he was a well-known rascal, and as such a job was right in his line, it seemed as if conviction was certain.

But then at the eleventh hour came forward a private detective from Chicago, who put himself in communication with the bank (fillies).

He said that, attracted by the reward, he had been working up the case, and had not only become satisfied that Kellish didn't do the job, but he could put his hands on the man that did the trick.

The bank men were doubtful, but they instructed the detective to go ahead, and the result was the capture of a well-known rascal at Columbus, Ga., and in his possession—for the arrest was so carefully planned that it appeared to take him completely by surprise—was the complete disguise that the bank robber had worn, as well as five thousand dollars of the stolen funds.

And the man broke down completely, too, when arrested and charged with the crime, and admitted he was the man who did the job.

He was tried and convicted, Kellish being released, although the cashier was positive that he was not the man who had assaulted him.

The fellow said that he had buried the rest of the money in the pine woods, but after making a couple of trials to find the place of the "cache," declared that he could not locate it.

He admitted, too, that he had sold the horse to Kellish, and declared he had done so with the idea of throwing suspicion upon him, and so directing it from himself.

The Northern police officers, who knew the rascal well, did not believe a word of his story, as they asserted he was not a man with pluck or brains enough to plan and perpetrate such a first-class job.

It was all a trick, they declared, on Kellish's part to get out of the scrape.

But to the public at large it did not seem likely that a man would be apt to consign himself to the tender mercies of such a den of horrors as the Georgia State Prison, unless he really felt the pangs of guilt gnawing at his soul.

The public were inclined to believe that they had made a mistake about this, though, when before his first month in prison had come to an end the culprit managed to effect his escape, got off without trouble, was not recaptured, and a strict examination revealed that a large sum of money had been used to effect his escape, for three of the prison wardens had undoubtedly been bribed, although the State couldn't prove it.

Was it any wonder then that such a man as this was commonly known as the "Tycoon?"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CUBAN LADY.

THE Georgia business was the narrowest squeak that the "great chief" had ever received, and it proved a warning to him never to work in the inhospitable lands of the South again.

At the time we introduce the Tycoon to the reader he was riding serenely on the topmost wave of fortune.

With three confederates he had lately made a haul of twenty thousand dollars from an express messenger, whom they had dexterously assaulted in his car, and the job had been worked so neatly that not the slightest trace of the operators had the expressman been able to obtain.

Kellish was walking leisurely along, swinging his light cane, admiring the beauty of the many handsome girls always to be seen on Broadway between the hours of three and five, and meditating in what quarter he should operate next, and pondering, too, upon intelligence which he had received that day from a friend attached to police head-quarters, that the new detective who was beginning to make something of a name for himself had been placed upon his track.

This "friend at head-quarters" cost the Tycoon a thousand dollars a year, but he considered the money well invested, for, as in this case, he always received early warning of any important action threatening either himself or his pal.

"I wonder who the deuce this City Thoroughbred is?" he murmured, as he strolled along. "If I could only find out what the man was like, I should be able to be on my guard against him."

"But, as it is, I might take a drink with the fellow and wouldn't recognize him."

"My friend at head-quarters must get me a chance to see what he looks like, although he declares that is impossible, for he has never even seen the fellow himself, and he believes that he always wears a disguise."

"But when I show my man a hundred-dollar bill and tell him that it is his, if he can only contrive to work the trick, I would be willing to bet another hundred he will manage to find some way to accomplish it."

"Always disguised," bah! that is only a trick to make the fellow appear mysterious.

"Let me once set my eyes upon him and I'll bet a fortune I'll know him again, disguise or no disguise."

"Such talk may do to cram children with, but it's too weak food for such men as I am."

Just as he had come to this conclusion his quick eyes caught sight of a lady on the promenade ahead of him whom he was overtaking.

She was a tall, stylishly-dressed girl, not exactly handsome, yet with a prepossessing face.

A brunette, very dark, evidently of foreign extraction, and with the slight down upon the upper lip peculiar to some women of the Latin races.

In spite of this her face was attractive, and Kellish, who was quite a lady's man—report declared that he had had as many as a dozen wives in his time—took it into his head that he would like to make the lady's acquaintance, particularly as she wore magnificent diamonds, and from her general appearance seemed to be like one rolling in wealth.

"It would be a glorious idea if I could strike some girl like this and so get into fashionable society for awhile."

"What a haul I would make of diamonds and bonds if I could only get in among these Fifth avenue big-bugs!"

The lady paused for a moment to look in a shop-window where there was a collection of paintings, and Kellish embraced the opportunity to get a good view of her.

And as they stood side by side, each apparently attentively engaged in examining the display of art, but Kellish in reality studying the face of the lady, thereby making the discovery that she was not so young as he had taken her to be—for instead of being a girl of eighteen as he had imagined, she was a woman of about thirty—one of the heavy diamond rings that she wore slipped from her finger and fell to the ground.

The Tycoon was prompt to improve the opportunity.

He picked up the ring—and most gladly would have pocketed it, for it was a solitaire diamond worth certainly a couple of thousand dollars, but her brilliant dark eyes were upon him, so with a polite bow he tendered her the trinket.

"Permit me, miss," he said, assuming his most gallant manner.

She seemed a trifle confused, affected to blush a little under his ardent gaze, and stammered in a low but quite musical voice:

"Thanks, sir, you are so kind."

"Oh, don't mention it, miss; it always gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to be of service to a lady," and the Tycoon made another profound bow.

"You are very gallant, sir."

"I hold it to be a gentleman's duty to do all in his power to oblige a lady, and I should be extremely pleased indeed if I could render you a greater service than merely to restore you a simple ring."

"You can do me another favor, if you will be so kind," she said, with that charming frankness so captivating in the softer sex.

"I shall only be too happy," he replied, with another polite bow.

The Tycoon was delighted. Fortune was clearly smiling upon him, for here he had been lucky enough to scrape an acquaintance with a lady who was evidently a member of the upper ten.

And as the Tycoon was particularly a practical business-man, already in his "mind's eye" he saw the avenue open to a lot of enterprises, whereby he and his pals could acquire much wealth.

"I am on my way to the St. Nicholas Hotel, but I do not know exactly where it is situated. I was told to go down Broadway, and assured that I could not miss it."

"The advice was correct; the hotel is only a few blocks further down the street. I am going right past it, and if you will permit me I shall take great pleasure in pointing it out to you. Allow me to offer you my card."

And in his politest manner the Tycoon tendered the bit of pasteboard.

Kellish was always provided with this sort of thing, for he believed in doing business in style.

The lady read the name aloud.

"COLONEL LE GRAND CARMOLI."

"Yes, miss, of Waterproof, Mississippi. I am here in New York on a brief visit."

"My own case exactly. I am a native of this city, but have resided in Cuba ever since I was a little girl," and she too drew a card from a

most exquisite little card-case, and gave it to the Tycoon.

"Mrs. GENERAL MANUEL HESPEDES,"

was the inscription that the card bore.

And as this chief of rascals read the name, through his brain floated visions of the enormous wealth that these Cuban generals were rumored to possess.

Certainly this promised to be the greatest piece of luck that he had ever struck, if he was only careful in playing his cards correctly.

"I am delighted, madam, to have the honor of making your acquaintance, although it is the fortunate result of chance instead of a formal introduction."

"It is very lucky that it happened for I might have lost my ring if it had not been for you, and that would have been no trifling loss, for it cost twenty-one hundred dollars. It was a present from my husband, my engagement-ring."

"To lose such a precious token would have been a serious matter indeed," the Tycoon declared.

And then the two strolled down the street together, chattering like old acquaintances, the Tycoon doing his level best to keep up to the life the character which he had assumed.

CHAPTER XXI.

KELLISH'S GAME.

"I'm almost a stranger in New York," the lady remarked, as they proceeded along the street. "I came from Cuba to join my husband here, but important business called him away before my arrival, so that I have been without an escort, consequently have seen very little of the city, and have not gone at all into society."

"My own case exactly," the Tycoon remarked. "At home I do not lack for friends. In fact, all along the Mississippi from Memphis to Orleans I am at home everywhere, but in this overgrown city I am completely lost, madam."

"Possibly I may still further trespass upon your kindness," the lady remarked, abruptly, as if suddenly impressed with a new idea.

"I shall be delighted—pray command me!" exclaimed the adventurer, in high glee that affairs were progressing so favorably.

"I am going to the St. Nicholas on particular business," she remarked, a trace of confusion plainly visible in her manner. "I set out heedlessly and without reflection, but now as I approach the hotel I begin to think that it was not wise in me to come in person, and that I ought to have sought the aid of an experienced lawyer."

There was evidently some deep mystery in all this, and the Tycoon jumped at the chance, for, to his thinking, a mystery connected with the wife of a Cuban general who sported about five thousand dollars' worth of diamonds upon her person, must be productive of some money to a man of genius like himself.

"Madam, allow me to offer my services. I am a lawyer by profession, and shall be glad of the chance to serve you!" he hastened to say.

"Why, this is really fortunate!" she exclaimed, "for I should not have known to whom to apply. As you have doubtless surmised, I am in trouble, and I need the assistance of a clear-headed, honest lawyer. My husband and myself have been separated for some little time now."

"After his arrival in this country he became infatuated with some wretched stage creature, an opera-singer, or a ballet-dancer, or something of that sort, and although I do not care enough about a man who can so far forget his position as to disgrace himself in that way, yet I cannot allow him to squander upon such a miserable creature both his own fortune and mine."

"He is stopping at the St. Nicholas, and in answer to a letter of mine wherein I threatened to take legal proceedings unless he came to some agreement with me, he begged that I would visit him to-day before I proceeded to any extreme measures."

"Now would it not be better that you should see him as my legal adviser and learn what he proposes to do?"

"By far the best plan!" the Tycoon replied, instantly.

"I will wait in the parlor while you see him, and if necessary for me to appear in the matter you can bring him there."

"Just pencil on the back of one of my

cards authority for me to act," said the adventurer.

They had now entered the vestibule of the hotel and halted.

She complied with his request; then Kellish escorted her to the parlor, and leaving her there, proceeded to the office to hunt up the general.

"Gone away," responded the hotel clerk, briefly, consulting the register.

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, sir, left yesterday."

"Did he say when he would be back?"

"Isn't coming back at all. Sailed for Brazil yesterday afternoon."

The Tycoon guessed the game at once. The general had merely written to his wife to gain time, and had taken advantage of an opportunity to escape to Brazil, with which country the United States has no extradition treaty.

"He has collared the boodle and vamoosed the ranch," muttered the inquirer to himself, dropping naturally into the thieves' argot, as their peculiar figures of speech are termed.

"I represent Mrs. General Hespédes; I am her legal adviser," he continued aloud, handing the clerk the card upon which the lady had written, for inspection.

"Ah, I suppose then you have come for the parcel that the general left for his wife?"

The Tycoon pricked up his ears. What was in this parcel?

"Yes, if you will be so kind; the lady is in the parlor now."

"Ah, I'm glad of it, for the general was quite particular in warning me to be careful that the parcel reached her."

Then, going to the safe, the clerk opened it and took out a small parcel carefully wrapped in stiff brown paper, called one of the bell boys and bade him go with the gentleman and give the package to Mrs. General Hespédes in the parlor.

The package was delivered, and when the boy departed, as there wasn't any one in the parlor to observe them, Kellish advised that the package be opened.

The lady did so; a letter, a safe-key and a bundle of United States bonds were revealed.

The Tycoon's eyes sparkled.

The topmost bend was a thousand dollar one, and as the others seemed like it, and he felt there was a strong probability that they were the same, there was fortune in the little parcel.

The letter was brief, and the lady read it aloud:

"I sail this afternoon for Brazil. You will never see me again, but I am not base enough to rob you of your fortune, despite your accusations."

"In this package are the United States bonds and the key of the safe, which stands in the dining-room, where the rest of the securities are kept."

"All is yours. Farewell!"

The lady shrugged her shoulders with true Latin indifference.

"Peste! I do not care for the man so long as my money is safe," she remarked.

"I learned to despise him long ago."

Then she opened the little bag, which, after the fashion of the age, she carried, crammed the bonds into it and put the safe-key in her wallet.

"I should advise you to put those valuable securities in some safe place as soon as possible," Kellish remarked; "also the others in the safe, for that is anything but a secure place for them."

"We have rascals in New York who, to get at a goodly sum of money, would break through the iron walls of an ordinary safe almost as easily and quickly as though they were composed of pine boards."

"It is an excellent idea, and if you will accompany me we will go home and examine them and then put them in some safe place immediately."

"Have you any idea of what securities are in the safe and their value?" the Tycoon asked, insinuatingly.

"There should be about fifty thousand dollars in United States bonds and fifty thousand more in railroad stocks and other securities. I do not exactly remember what they all are, for I have very little head for business."

Despite himself the Tycoon could not repress a start of surprise.

Fifty thousand dollars in United States bonds would be a haul worth making, and

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this extraordinary prize seemed to be fairly within his grasp.

Woman like, the Cuban lady had been impressed by his appearance, and all he had to do was to keep up the deception and most certainly the bonds would be his.

"The quicker such a sum as that is put in the charge of a safe-deposit company the better," Kellish remarked, with an appearance of great wisdom.

"Yes, I suppose so, but I really know so little about business; I shall have to rely entirely on your judgment."

"You may depend upon me," Kellish replied, promptly, and with a profound bow.

Then they quitted the hotel.

"When I came to the city I took possession of my husband's house, which he had fitted up in Twenty-ninth street. My arrival was a surprise to him, and he immediately left the city on the pretext that he had important business interests to look after.

"I did not understand at the time why he should want such a house, but I discovered very soon that it was his intention to install this miserable stage wretch there, but my timely arrival frustrated the plan."

The house had been fitted up in excellent style, as Kellish speedily saw upon entering it, although from the outside it did not look particularly attractive, being a small, two-storied brick house, one of the old-fashioned kind, about a block from Broadway.

The safe to which the letter referred was an elaborate affair in the dining-room, fashioned after the pattern of a sideboard and so excellent was the imitation that detection, except upon close examination, was almost impossible.

The Tycoon with his quick eyes had noticed all the surroundings.

No one within the house had observed their entrance, as far as he could see, the lady having used a latch-key. If there were any servants in the house, they were in some remote part of it, for there was no sign of their presence.

A fortune would speedily be within his grasp and he was determined to secure it.

In his pocket he carried a small sand-club, a weapon he was quite expert in using, and without which he never traveled.

The plan he had formed was an extremely simple one.

After the safe was open he was going to suggest to the lady that the bonds and securities be placed upon the table so that they might be counted and a list of them taken.

Then when the plunder was in plain sight—within reach of his hand—he would manage to get an opportunity to give her a tap with the sand-club which would stun her into insensibility.

And when the lady was thus disposed of, it would be an easy matter for him to pocket all the securities that could be easily marketed, and leave the house as quickly as possible.

The beauty of the scheme was its simplicity.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TYCOON IS SNARED.

REALLY the thing seemed to be so simple that the Tycoon felt almost ashamed of the job.

A fortune right beyond the tips of his fingers and only a weak bit of a woman in the way.

"I must arrange it so as to get a chance to give her a lick of my life-preserver when her back is turned," he mused in his mind.

"I should hate like the deuce to be obliged to strike her right before her face and eyes, after making such a favorable impression upon her."

"Oh, that would never do at all; I must play the gentleman in this matter, even if I never see the woman again."

"Have the kindness to open the safe, please, and then we will see if this husband of mine has told the truth or not," the lady said, handing him the key of the safe.

"I do not have very much faith in his statement," she continued.

"It would be just like the man to change his mind at the last minute and help himself to all the valuables he could get his hands upon."

"Oh, I feel sure you wrong him, madam; the fellow would be worse than a Turk to

commit such an outrage upon such a charming lady as yourself," said the Tycoon, with a most gallant bow.

"Ah, I fear you are a sad flatterer," the lady remarked, appearing to be a little embarrassed by the pointed compliment.

"I give you fair warning that hereafter I shall never be willing to believe there is any truth in man."

"Oh, madam, because you find one man who is not to be trusted, it is unfair to condemn all."

"Perhaps so, but I fear I shall always doubt," she replied, with a dubious shake of the head.

"Pray, open the safe. I am dying with impatience."

"How disgusted she will be after she recovers from the clip on the head and discovers that I have eloped with all the valuables," muttered the Tycoon, as he knelt and inserted the key in the safe.

And hardly had he done so when there came a swish of something through the air, and the bold and wily Tycoon, stunned into insensibility, sunk forward on his face.

How long he remained in this state he knew not, but when his senses slowly came back he looked around in wonder.

He was in a cellar, into which no ray of daylight seemed to penetrate.

A small lantern, placed upon the damp ground, served to dimly illuminate the place.

The Tycoon was lying on his back on a sort of a rude bunk made out of boards, and destitute of any covering.

The bunk was a couple of feet high, and the man was so securely lashed to it by stout cords passed around his arms, legs, and the middle of his body, that he found it almost impossible to move, although he exerted his utmost strength in attempting to alter his position.

Another strange fact, too, his stockings and shoes had been removed, although not a single piece of his other clothing had been touched.

"What in the name of all that is wonderful is the meaning of this?" he cried, savagely.

"Have I been entrapped? and, if I have, why am I put here—what is to be done to me?"

The iron-hearted desperado was nervous under these strange circumstances, for the unknown danger which seemed to threaten appalled him.

Then abruptly, and without warning, a door in the darkest corner of the cellar, which the Tycoon had not noticed before, opened, and a young man, neatly clad in a dark business suit, walked into the cellar, and coming to the foot of the bunk surveyed the prisoner with a quiet smile.

The Tycoon took a single look at the handsome, smoothly-shaven face, and the truth flashed upon him.

He had been tricked in the most outrageous manner.

This was the Cuban lady.

He had gone for wool and got shorn.

"Well, Tycoon, how do you find yourself?" the visitor asked, breaking the silence.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"Oho! you are too old a stager to put such a question as that."

"What do you want with me—why have you fooled me in this way?"

"That's my business."

"Your business?"

"Yes, I am a detective officer."

"The Genteel Spotter!" burst involuntarily from the lips of the prisoner.

"You can go to the head; you have guessed the riddle correctly the first time."

"And you decoyed me here on purpose to give me a clip on the head?" cried Tycoon, mad with anger when he thought how completely he had been fooled.

"Yes, I had to lay you out, so as to bring you down here," the other answered.

"I know it was rather rough, for you swallowed the story of the Cuban lady without once choking at the bait; you calculated to lay out the lady at the first convenient opportunity; and then get away with the plunder."

"It would have been a beautiful job, and that is the reason I made the temptation so strong; you were a big fish, and I knew you wouldn't be apt to bite unless I offered you a big bait."

"Well, you have tricked me, but what are you up to? What is the meaning of this concern that you have me tied to—why have you brought me down into such a place as this—what's your game, anyway?"

"Whew! you fairly overwhelm a fellow with questions," replied the detective, and then he brought an old box out of a corner of the cellar and sat down at the foot of the bunk.

"You might as well let me know first as last what you are up to," the Tycoon observed in a sulky tone. "And, I say, why in blazes did you remove my stockings and shoes?"

"Take it easy and I will explain," responded the detective.

"In the first place you know, I suppose, that you are 'wanted'?"

"That is possible, but if I am, why didn't you clap the handcuffs on and take me to headquarters, not truss me up here like a blasted chicken?"

"Because I wished to have a little talk with you first. I want some information."

"Information!"

"Yes, and that is the reason I brought you down here. This is a fine place to talk; we can't disturb any one even if we shrieked at the top of our lungs."

The Tycoon, man of iron nerves though he was, shivered.

He felt in his bones that there was a fearful meaning back of this simple bit of information.

"Yes, sir, I could kill you right here, and you could yell till your throat cracked, no one would hear you," the detective continued.

"What good would it do you to kill me?" the Tycoon questioned. "I never met you before, never injured you in any way that you should hold a grudge against me."

"Of course, as a detective, it is only natural you should want to snap the dabbies on my wrists, if you got a chance, but that hasn't anything to do with killing a man."

"Oh, no; but, as I said before, I want a little information."

"About what?"

"Bristol Bill!"

There was a moment of silence and then the prisoner blurted out:

"What do I know about him?"

"Everything; you are the man who planned his escape, assisted by the woman who clings so tightly to the scoundrel."

"You know where he is now secreted, and that is what I want to know."

"And if I did know, do you think I would betray a pal? No, sir: you don't know me! I would not give a pal away if you cut me into mincemeat!" cried the Tycoon, with a sudden outburst of ferocity.

"You wouldn't be fit for anything in that shape except to feed dogs, and I don't own any," replied the detective.

"Do your worst; I'll not speak!"

"You will not?" and there was a slight motion of the detective's hand as he ended the sentence.

A yell came from the lips of the helpless outlaw.

"My God! what are you doing?"

"What's the matter with you? What are you yelling in that way for? I'm only tickling your foot with a straw."

And as he repeated the operation, another yell came from the Tycoon, followed by an outburst of curses.

The detective suspended operations for a minute.

"Oh, come, this will not do," he said, in a disgusted tone. "If you're going to yell like that right at the beginning, what will you do after I've been at it for an hour or two?"

"In Heaven's name, man, have you no pity?" howled the Tycoon, hoarsely. "Can you sit there and torture me to death?"

"And why should I have any pity on such a remorseless wolf as you have proved yourself to be a hundred times?" cried the bloodhound of society, sternly.

"Think of the crimes that stain your soul, and then despair when you ask me for mercy."

"I am determined to hunt you human wolves down, either by fair means or foul. You know where Bristol Bill is concealed."

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"You must reveal that secret to me, or I'll torture you until you become a howling maniac. I am as remorseless as you have been in your career of crime. Speak, and you shall go free, provided you agree to leave the country, for as sure as I run foul of you again I'll hang you! Bristol Bill is my meat, and I hunger for him as the bloodhound hungers for his prey."

"Spare me and I will reveal all!" the Tycoon cried, in abject terror.

He had met his master.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CAPTURE.

All the preparations for the attack had been carefully made. The gambling-house was completely surrounded by officers in plain clothes, and each and every man had been instructed to kill Bristol Bill rather than allow him to escape, and as the desperado was well known to be a resolute man and one who would not hesitate to use his weapons if he was cornered, every one of the officers felt that life was not worth an hour's purchase if the outlaw succeeded in using his pistol.

At last the word was given and the column moved forward to the attack.

The bell was rung and when the negro opened the door in the cautious manner that we have before described, a cocked revolver was instantly passed through the opening and leveled at his head, and so neatly was the operation performed that the first intimation the guardian of the door received that anything was wrong was when he felt the cold muzzle of the pistol press against his temples.

"Don't utter a sound—don't attempt to give any alarm or I'll blow the whole top of your head off!" cried the superintendent of police, who led the attack in person, so anxious was he to capture the renowned Bristol Bill.

The African was a perfectly trustworthy man and tolerably brave as men go, but he was not devoted enough to his employers nor rash enough to lose his life in their service.

As the chief of police afterward observed, the darky nearly turned white with terror.

"For de love of goodness, boss, don't shoot!" he murmured in abject terror, his voice but little above a whisper.

"Open the door then and be quick about it!" was the stern command, "and mind, no nonsense, don't try to come any gum-games upon us, fur if you do you'll find that it is the worst job that you ever tackled in all your life!"

"Don't you be skeered! I ain't dat kind of a nigger. No sah!" the janitor declared, trembling in every limb. "It's all right, I'll open the door, and as fur kicking up a row, no sah! I'se been too well bring up fur dat."

"When you gits de dead wood on me I'm dat kind of a coon dat comes down, ebbery time, and don't you forgit dat, either!"

And then the African opened the door with an alacrity that proved he was a man of his word.

The officers stole in as noiselessly as so many cats, and carefully closed the door behind them.

"Take charge of this fellow, Williams," the superintendent said, "while I interview the coon number two. If he attempts to give any alarm by means of secret wires or anything of that kind, put a hole right through his head."

"Say, cap'n, for de love of goodness! don't you be in a hurry 'bout dat 'ere leetle job," the negro murmured, thoroughly scared. "I'll be just as quiet as a dead man—I won't even draw my bress!"

"All right! see that you behave yourself, for you know what you'll get if you don't."

And with this warning the leader of the party advanced to the inner door and gave the signal.

The secret panel opened immediately and the face of the second negro appeared.

The same game was played upon him that had succeeded so well with the first darky.

But this second man, a far greater coward than the first, no sooner felt the cold steel muzzle of the revolver pressing against his forehead and heard the ominous words of the intruder:

"Don't attempt to give any word or you die on the instant!"

Then he almost fainted away, so great was his fright.

"We want to come in and we want you to open the door, and without making any noise about the matter either," the chief of the attacking force continued. "If you feel disposed to behave yourself and do just as I say, no harm will come to you, but if you attempt to be ugly, I wouldn't give a five-cent piece for your life."

"For de Lor', boss, I'll do ebberyting you tell me!" the frightened negro responded.

"Open the door, then; that's the first thing on the programme."

"Yes, sah."

And the alacrity with which the man performed the task was wonderful.

The police trooped in.

"Any secret wires or other means by which you can sound an alarm up-stairs in case of trouble down here?" the chief asked.

"Yes, sah, dat button dar on de wall," answered the negro, with a promptitude which plainly showed he was desirous of doing all in his power to curry favor with the invaders.

Life and liberty were sweet, and the African did not intend to risk either if he could help it.

"How does it work?"

"Yon pull it out, sah, and dar's a wire dat runs to a big gong-bell right under de faro-table, and de game is for me to pull dat wire de moment I see any signs dat de police are round."

"I see; well, we're all private gentlemen here; you don't see any police officers in this party, do you?"

"No, sah, private gemmens, sah," and despite the gravity of the situation the negro could not help showing his ivories in proof that he appreciated the joke.

"Sit down and behave yourself like a gentleman and we'll treat you like a lord."

The negro sat down immediately.

"You'll find me right dar, sah, ebbery time."

"One of you take care of this fellow, and if he opens his head to give the alarm or attempts to pull the bell while we are ascending the stairs, blow his brains out on the instant," the leader commanded.

One of the detectives, with drawn and cocked revolver, took up a position by the side of the negro.

"For de Lor', gemmen, you won't find a quieter man in dis yer town dan I am, but you'll 'scuse me, gemmens, if I say dat you're a deal too soon—yes, sah, you're altogether too previous, dis evening, not dis evening, some odder evening, you know, yar, yar!" and the negro grinned.

"What do you mean?"

"De game hasn't opened yet; you won't find nobody up-stairs for to speak of, and dat's what's de matter with Hannah."

"We understand all about that; you might as well undertake to teach your grandmother to suck eggs as to jump to our little game, but as you spoke with good intent I'm much obliged to you all the same."

"All right, sah, don't mention it. I allers tries for to be on good terms wid gemmens in your line ob business. Dar's no telling when a coon like me may want fur to hab a friend fur to speak a good word fur him."

"We'll remember you, don't be alarmed about that, if you behave yourself."

"You kin bet all yer wealth on dat, sah!"

Then, leaving the negro in charge of a detective, the party ascended the stairs.

Their revolvers were out, the hammers raised, ready for action.

They were about to encounter a desperate man, one who would not hesitate for a moment to shed the blood of a dozen men if he could escape the toils of justice by so doing.

It was likely, too, that there might be two or three more of the same kidney with him, and in that case a desperate fight might be anticipated, unless the surprise was so complete that the rascals were afforded no chance to offer resistance.

The officers hardly breathed as they ascended the stairs with noiseless feet.

Not a soul was encountered, but the sound of men's voices came from the inner apartments.

There were four in the attacking party.

Four as resolute and determined men as

ever snapped a handcuff upon the wrist of a felon.

They paused for a moment in the upper entry.

The door leading from the back room, where the faro-table was placed, into the hall was always kept closed and locked, as the officers found it on this occasion, but the door into the front apartment was standing open.

As the negro janitor had said, it was altogether too early for visitors, and therefore the man who attended to the hat-room was not at his post, or else the intruders would have been immediately discovered the moment they made their appearance on the upper landing.

But as it was the door was open and the way clear.

The attackers hesitated for a moment in the entry, and the chief ran his eyes over his followers, as if to ascertain that they were all ready and appreciated the gravity of the situation.

Then, satisfied with the inspection, he gave the signal for the advance.

Noiselessly, like so many grim specters, they glided into the front parlor.

There were only two men in the room, Bolly Lewes, the proprietor of the place, and a clerical-looking gentleman with smoothly-shaven face and rather long, dark hair.

They were seated in easy-chairs, close by the sideboard, and had been taking some wine together, for the glasses, only half-drained, were in their hands.

There was not a sign that the place was used for gambling purposes, for the faro-table was always removed except when wanted for actual use.

"Well, well," exclaimed Bolly Lewes, looking at the officers in astonishment, and yet evidently not much alarmed, "if this isn't a surprise-party you can take all I'm worth."

"What's the matter, Captain Williams?" and he addressed the question to the officer who stood next to the Genteel Spotter, and who was the captain in charge of the precinct. "What's bicc'e? You look as if you had come on business, but as you see, there isn't anything going on."

"This gentleman is in command," the captain said, indicating Roland Yorke.

"Ah! I've not had the pleasure of your acquaintance, but the captain will tell you that I'm a pretty square man," the gambler observed, pleasantly.

"It is not you, sir, but your companion I want, Bristol Bill," and with a quick movement the detective removed the wig that the desperado wore.

Again Bristol Bill was in the toils.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BROUGHT TO BAY.

The surprise was complete.

The movement was so sudden, and performed so adroitly, that even the astute Bristol Bill was taken completely unawares.

Of course he had recognized the Genteel Spotter the moment the invaders had entered the room, but, confident in the completeness of his disguise, he did not believe that even his argus-eyed foe would be able to recognize him.

Despite the overwhelming odds, the desperado would undoubtedly have offered resistance if there had been the least possible chance for a successful fight.

As it was, in the first flush of his rage at being thus easily captured, he clapped his hand to a revolver which he had concealed in a side-pocket; but Roland Yorke was on the alert for just such a proceeding, and with his leveled pistol he warned the desperado against the movement.

"Don't attempt to draw a weapon, or I will kill you without mercy!" he cried, and the tones in which he spoke plainly indicated that he would be as good as his word.

"You are fairly captured, and it will not do you the least bit of good to be ugly about the matter. I don't care to take upon myself the double office of judge and executioner, but as surely as there is a heaven above me, so surely will I kill you without mercy if you attempt to show fight!"

Bolly Lewes thought it was time for him to put in a word at this point, for he well knew the desperate nature of Bristol Bill and

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was afraid that, in his ugliness at being so easily captured, he might be tempted to do something rash.

A weight had been taken off his mind, too, by the discovery that the visit of the officers was not intended for him, nor for his establishment, and not for a thousand dollars would he have been willing to allow a bloody battle to take place in his parlor, for that would insure a publicity to the place which would bring utter ruin to his business.

"There isn't any use of making a fuss, Bill," the gambler observed, soothingly. "These gentlemen have got the dead wood on you this time, and you might as well take it easy as to kick up a row."

"Ah, that's the way of the world," the ruffian cried, with bitter accent. "When a man is down, everybody takes a kick at him."

"Oh, come, Bill," the gambler protested, "that isn't the way to talk at all. I've always been a friend of yours, and have shown it in a hundred different ways."

"And in this case I'm acting like a friend. These gentlemen have got you dead to rights, and what is the use of your kicking against it? You might as well make up your mind to go along quietly."

"One thing is certain: if you attempt to show fight now, the chances are about ten to one that you will never have another opportunity."

"So I say I'm acting like a true friend in advising you to take it easy."

Bristol Bill glared around him for a moment with a look on his face akin to that which appears on the face of the caged wild animal restlessly seeking to find some weak spot in his prison bars, and then, fixing his gaze upon the detective, cried:

"You hound! why have you hunted me down? It is to you that I am indebted for this but there's a bitter reckoning ahead."

"You may be able to send me up the river, but neither you nor the whole force of the State of New York will be able to keep me there, and when I return I swear I'll have your life if it takes ten years to accomplish the task!"

"Oh, will you?" replied the Genteel Spotter, contemptuously. "Bristol Bill, there are two old sayings that I would like to recall to your mind; the first is, 'Threatened men live long,' and the second, 'Barking dogs seldom bite.'"

"You'll find that I can bite, and will, too!" the desperado cried, savagely.

"I don't doubt that your inclination to do me a mischief is strong enough, but I do doubt your ability to do the job."

"We have had considerable of a contest already, and up to the present date the advantages have been decidedly on my side."

"You were carrying it with a high hand when I started in to hunt you down, but I succeeded in not only bringing your crimes home to you but in driving you into a corner from which escape is not easy."

"You speak about going up the river, but, Bristol Bill, the odds are at least a hundred to one that you will not go to Sing Sing."

"The man that you hurt in your escape from the Tombs died last night, and if you don't swing for his murder it will be because there isn't any justice in the land."

The ruffian was visibly affected by this intelligence, and his face turned a shade paler.

This was a result that he had not contemplated.

"You can't prove that I hurt the man!" he exclaimed, defiantly, after a moment's pause.

"Oh, I'm not going to enter into the particulars of the case and tell you what I can prove or what I can't."

"You'll find out soon enough, for the way things are working the chances are big that you will be brought to an immediate trial," the detective answered.

He did not think it judicious to reveal to the desperado that the man whom he had wounded so severely was sensible up to the time of his death, and had made a dying declaration that Bristol Bill was his murderer.

"Oh, well, I suppose the game is up for the present," the ruffian remarked, rising with an ill-grace and allowing the officer to search for and remove his weapons.

"But I don't exactly understand what has made you so infernal eager in this matter," he said to the vigilant detective, who, with the eyes of a lynx, was watching to see that the search was complete and that the prisoner did not retain a weapon.

"I had made up my mind to hunt you down, and was determined to do it; that's all there is to it," the sleuth-hound replied.

"Yes, but the woman for whose sake you first entered into the business, took the trouble to hunt you up and tell you she bore no malice for what had occurred in the past, and she requested you to take no further steps in the matter," the ruffian remarked, sullenly.

"That was a very transparent dodge, and do you for a moment suppose I didn't see through it right at the beginning?

"The woman is under your thumb; she has changed greatly for the worse since her youthful days, and you sent her to me, when you discovered I was going to make it hot for you, thinking she would be able to switch me off on another track."

"Well, since you went into the matter solely on her account I reckoned she might have some influence over you," Bristol Bill replied.

"And were you fool enough to suppose that I was that kind of a man who would be apt to either forgive or forget that cellar business when you doomed me to be eaten up alive by the rats?" Roland Yorke replied, for the first time betraying signs of excitement.

"Why, you bloodthirsty scoundrel! when I was waiting in the dark for the rats to begin their attack, suffering all the agonies of the damned, I swore by all I held sacred in the world that if a merciful Heaven saw fit by some wonderful chance to preserve my life I would devote all my days to bringing you and all such human wolves to justice."

"A miracle was worked in my favor and the result is I will either land you in the State Prison for life or on the hangman's scaffold."

Bristol Bill glared at the speaker in sullen rage and for a moment looked as if he meditated springing upon him, but if he had any such idea the officers at his side quickly frustrated it by snapping a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists, forcing a bitter curse from the desperado's lips as he felt the contact of the steel bracelets with his flesh.

"Do you want me, captain?" asked the gambler, rising in a cheerful, business sort of a way.

"No, Bolly, nothing against you to-night, only be careful what company you keep. A man with a reputation like this fellow's don't do your house any good. I don't see anything wrong about here," and there was a quiet smile as he looked around him. "And it's lucky for you that I don't, for if you had had any cards or chips, or any gambling implements in sight I should be obliged to 'pull' the place."

"Oh, I don't gamble any more; no game here now; I've made money enough to retire," responded Lewes, with a smile that was childlike and bland.

"And I know so little of what is going on that I had no idea that Bill, here, was mixed up in any crooked work. But take a drink, gentlemen, before you go, and for old times' sake, Bristol, I'll see that you are provided with as good a lawyer as money can buy."

The captain laughed; he understood how matters were well enough.

But they all filed up to the sideboard and took a sociable drink, Bill alone refusing.

"I wouldn't drink with that scoundrel of a detective!" he cried. "The liquor would choke me!"

The rest all laughed at this, thinking it to be a good joke, and the captain took it upon himself to tender the gambler a piece of advice.

"A good lawyer for Bill is all well enough, but if you'll take my counsel you will go for the jury and the witnesses, for if you don't manage to get at and square some of them, Bill will have about nine hundred and ninety-nine chances out of a thousand, to try the fit of a hempen cravat."

"So-long!"

And then the officers withdrew with their prisoner.

An hour later Bristol Bill was once more a prisoner, in the Tombs.

CHAPTER XXX.

A CLEW AT LAST.

GREAT was the excitement in the flash cribs of the city—as the saloons patronized by the criminal classes are called in the thieves argot—when the news of the recapture of Bristol Bill became public property, particularly when it was also learned that the officer who had been hurt by Bill had died of his wounds and there was an almost absolute certainty that Bristol Bill would be convicted of murder.

There was a hurrying to and fro among the friends of the accused man, for it was plain, right at the beginning that a large sum of money would be needed for his defense.

The most noted firm of criminal lawyers in the city had been employed, but these wily and sagacious gentlemen said at the beginning, after looking into the case, it was hopeless, and they didn't see a chance, if the trial was a fair one, to save Bristol Bill from the gallows which he so richly deserved.

When the counsel of the police captain was reported to them, they laughed and said the advice was good and some one ought to follow it, but, of course it was out of their line.

Rats are quick to quit a sinking ship, and when Bristol Bill seemed doomed, some of the first to fall away from his side were the men who had profited most by the life of crime he had led.

Slippery Moses, being the man who had generally bought Bristol Bill's plunder when it had been in such a shape that he could dispose of it without any trouble, had probably made more out of the desperado than any other person, but when he was visited by Rosamond Kendrickson, who clung steadily to the ruffian, despite his downfall, a paltry hundred dollars was all he was willing to contribute toward the fund to get the desperado out of his trouble.

And then the moment the woman departed, he hastened to find Roland Yorke.

Believing that Bristol Bill had come to the end of his rope he was eager to be on good terms with the successful detective officer, even though he did an injury to his old pal.

The communication he made to Roland Yorke was a most important one and set the eager detective immediately to work.

By means of his spies he had long ago "located" the woman who for so many years had been intimately associated with Bristol Bill.

She resided in a neat little cottage in the upper part of Brooklyn, New York's sister city.

It was a rather out-of-the-way location, and convenient as a place of retreat for any of the gang captained by Bristol Bill when New York became too hot to hold them.

Through his spies, the detective ascertained that the woman was alone in the house, all the gang being scattered by Bristol Bill's capture.

Under cover of the night Roland Yorke made a trip to Brooklyn and called upon Rosamond Kendrickson.

She was surprised at the visit, particularly when the detective informed her that he had come upon some particular business.

"Concerning Bristol Bill?" she asked, anxiously.

"No, about another matter, though he may be mixed up in it for all I know."

"Well, proceed," she said, after a pause.

"I want a little information."

The woman laughed harshly.

"Don't you think you have come to the wrong shop?" she questioned. "You have hounded my man to his death, I'm afraid, and do you think I would do you any favor?"

"Would you rather have me for a foe or a friend?" the detective asked in his quiet way.

"It doesn't matter much to me which you are," the woman replied, defiantly.

"Oh, don't it? Hold out your wrists then and let me snap the bracelets on!"

"What for?"

"You are my prisoner. It was you who

supplied the tools and the weapons to Bristol Bill so that he was enabled to escape from the Tombs."

"You can't prove it!" she cried.

"Oh, yes, I can; I knew it was you the moment I heard of the job, but for the sake of the love my father once had for you I wouldn't press the matter."

"I know exactly where you got the tools and the weapons."

"That accursed Jew, Slippery Moses, has betrayed me!" she cried, white with anger.

This was not true, for Moses had not spoken.

The detective had worked the old trick of pretending to know everything and so ascertained what he really did not know.

"Moses is a wise man, and would sacrifice his own brother to save himself."

"What is it you want?" she asked, doggedly.

"About fifteen years ago you left a baby girl with an old Irishwoman, and, through Moses, remitted the woman a certain sum quarterly for the care of the child," said Yorke, making a bold guess at what the Jew had declared to be the truth.

The woman burst into a loud laugh.

"Is that all?" she cried. "Well, you are welcome to that information. The Jew did recognize me, then, although years have passed. I had an idea at the time that he did, for I was fool enough to go to him without my face being muffled up as it was before. Not that it mattered a pin."

"Well, about the child?"

"I want to know its history!" Yorke answered.

"Oh, you think perhaps that there is a chance for you to make a stake there! Well, there isn't."

"The child is my daughter, and her father was a cousin of your father, whom I was fool enough to love when I was young and green."

"I believed his words of love and became his victim."

"Frightened at the consequences of his own passions he fled, and I have never heard from him since."

"Just a month after his flight, when I was deliberating whether or not to hide my shame in the river, Bristol Bill came along, disguised as a gentleman."

"He fell in love with me, and I, believing he would forgive my error, accepted his attentions."

"Then came the explosion that revealed his true character, and also my shame."

"I was driven out into the world. I went to Bill and he protected me until my baby was born, which I hated from the day it came into the world."

"When the baby was about a year old, Bill was arrested and jugged. I struggled along for a time, and then determined—as I saw I could not get my living as long as I was burdened with a child—to throw it into the river."

"On the dock my heart weakened, and I gave it to the Irishwoman; and have sent money regularly until the last quarter, when I came to the conclusion that the brat was old enough to look out for itself."

"That is all I know about it. I have never seen the child, and never want to see it."

"I hate it as I hate the miserable father who ruined all my life."

The anxious detective drew a long breath. His mind was relieved.

He took a wonderful interest in the girl who had saved him from being eaten by the rats, and he was very much afraid she would turn out to be the daughter of the desperado; it would be awkward, especially as he was going to do his best to hang Bristol Bill.

"You're right; there isn't any chance for a stake there, so that speculation is bu'sted. But, I say, wouldn't you like to see the girl? She's a good-looking piece of calico, and is getting along very well."

"No; what do I care for her? She would only remind me of what I once was when I listened to the lies of a smooth-tongued villain, and, for love of him, bartered the happiness of a whole life."

"Bristol Bill is the only soul in the world for whom I care; he has always treated me well, with the exception of one brief period."

"Then I jumped into the water, to make an end of it, and his hand pulled me out."

"He was superstitious—believed that it was fated we should not separate, and we came together again."

The detective heard and wondered.

Even such a brute as Bristol Bill had some good traits in his nature.

Yorke departed, feeling decidedly better now that he had solved the mystery surrounding Nan, who, comically, called herself the Good-for-nothing.

He determined to keep the secret of her birth a secret still, for the revelation would not be beneficial to any one.

He used his influence to secure the girl a position in an up-town store, and employed a motherly old lady with whom she boarded to teach her at night, and as she was naturally bright a few months worked wonders in the girl who, by such a strange chapter of accidents, had been rescued from the perilous life of the streets.

Nan thought there wasn't such another man in the world as the detective, and as for the dog Nip, the black bull-terrier, who accompanied the girl to her new home, he became almost as fond of the young man as of his mistress.

The chances are great that in a few years Nan will become Mrs. Roland Yorke.

Bristol Bill's trial came off in due time and justice miscarried, for the jury brought in a verdict that only consigned the murderer to the State Prison for twenty years.

And Bristol Bill rose in the prisoner's dock, after sentence was passed, and shook his fist at the Genteel Spotter, whom he blamed for his conviction.

"Twenty years is not a lifetime," he cried, in a voice hoarse with passion; "some day I will come out, and as sure as there is a devil in hell, I'll have your life, Roland Yorke!"

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